

# THE HOLY EX- ERCISE OF FASTING.

Described largely and plain-  
ly out of the word of God: with all the parts and  
causes, and severall kinds of the same: together  
with the most fit times, and convenient seasons,  
when and how long it should be held: with the  
manifest fruit and commoditie that redoun-  
deth to vs thereby: and the whole na-  
ture and order thereof.

*In certaine Homilies or Sermons, for the benefit of all  
those, that with care and conscience intend at  
any time publicly or privately to put  
in practise the same.*

By Nicolas Bownde Doctor of diuinitie.

Perused and allowed by publike authoritie.

*Occupie till I come, Luk. 16. 13.*

*Math. 25. 11.*

*It is well done good servant and faithfull: thou hast beene faithfull  
in little, I will make thee ruler over much: enter into thy masters joy.*

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And are to be sold at the signe of the Crowne in Pauls Church-yard  
by Simon Waterfor.

91.6/11

# THE HOLY

## EXERCISE OF FASTING

...the body of the Lord...  
...and the blood of the Lord...  
...the body of the Lord...  
...the blood of the Lord...  
...the body of the Lord...  
...the blood of the Lord...

307:02



**To the right Reuerend**  
*father in God, and right honourable Lord,*  
Doctor Iohn Iegon, Lord Bishop of  
*Norwich, the continuance, and daily in-*  
crease of all those heavenly vertues and  
*graces, which the Apostle S. Paul re-*  
quireth in a Bishop, 1. Tim. 3. 2.

**R**ight reuerend father, and very ho-  
nourable Lord, besides many other  
weightie reasons, whereby I haue  
beene mooued to commend this simple  
present vnto your Lordships fauour,  
which it is not necessarie nor conuenient  
to make all the world acquainted with (it  
is enough that your Lordship priuately  
doth take knowledge of them) it may be  
sufficient openly to professe thus much:  
That whereas my selfe, with all the rest  
of my brethren & fellow ministers, were  
in our countrie, and in all the rest of your  
L. Dioces of Norfolke and Suffolke, the  
last sommer inioyned by your letters sent  
to your officers to that ende (according

to the order set downe before in print, by  
the authoritie of the Kings most excel-  
lent maiestie) to come to the Church eue-  
ry weeke vpon the wednesdaies and fri-  
daies, with the rest of our people & flocke  
committed vnto vs: there and then to be  
occupied in praier and fasting, to intreat  
the Lord for our sinnes, and for the sinnes  
of the rest in this land: that so his heauie  
hand, which by the pestilence was then  
very sharpely, and that a long time stret-  
ched out in many cheife cities and towns  
of this realme, and namely, of this your L.  
Dioces, as Norwich, and Yarmouth, and  
some other might be called in at his ap-  
pointed time, as it was in the daies of  
king Dauid. Whereby it came to passe,  
that both here, and in many places els,  
there was much more preaching & hea-  
ring of the word of God, and praying vn-  
to him, then was before, and otherwise  
would haue beene. So that by meanes of  
the strait charge laid vpon all by your L.  
letter, there was much good done in this  
countrie at that time, the fruite whereof  
I hope,

Sam. 24. 16.

I hope, remaineth vnto this day: For though the booke containing the cause and order of those fasts, which was made by some of the cheife gouernours in the Church of England, and was authorized by the Kings Highnesse, did (as I take it) not onely giue leaue vnto all places publickly to meete vpon these aboue named daies to these ends, but did inioyne them to it: and so all men might haue taken knowledge of it, and of their dutie therein from thence: especially when the cause of it (namely so grieuous, and so vniuersall a plague) was so notorious, that it could not be hid from any: yet it was found too true by experience in many places, that vntill such time as men were further called vpon by your Lordships letter, full of great and weightie reasons to perswade thereunto, that neither many ministers had any care to call vpon their people to so holy and necessarie a seruice, nor the people any great deuotion to come: So slowe are men vnto any part of Gods seruice, yea though it doth so greatly cō-

912  
cerne them, especially to this principall  
part of it in fasting and praier (which hath  
beene very long out of vse) that they had  
neede not onely lightly to be called vpon,  
but with many strong coards violently  
hailed vnto it: though vnto all matters of  
the world, they are so forward and hastie,  
that they runne of their own accord, and  
none can stay them. Hereupon it hath  
come to passe, that a great part of the  
good, that this way hath beene done vn-  
to the people of God, and seruice to his  
maiestie, is to be imputed vnto your lord-  
ships diligent care, who did so timely, and  
effectually stirre vp men vnto it: especially  
in respect of those cheite places & others,  
vnder your Lordships iurisdiction, which  
then were greatly subiect vnto this visita-  
tion, as well as other parts of this land,  
neither are they all of them yet free from  
it. Therefore these beeing part of my la-  
bours at that time, they are in some sort  
due vnto your Lordship, by whose means  
I receiued encouragement thereunto, as  
others did to the like. And I haue presu-  
med

med to present them ynto your Lord-  
ship, that by them you may see, and by  
one may iudge of the rest, how readie we  
are, and shall be, to yeild obedience to all  
your L. godly proceedings: promising  
for my selfe, and presuming of the rest  
that when we shall be likewise comman-  
ded (which we expect, and hope for in  
time) to keepe solemne dayes of thank-  
giving for the mitigating of this plague  
in so great measure in the most places, and  
for the cleane taking of it away in many,  
we will be, by the grace of God, as ready  
to performe that part of seruice, as we  
haue beene forward vnto this. And in  
the meane season according to our boun-  
den duty we will indeauour not only pri-  
uately to be thankfull vnto God, but vpon  
all such daies, as we haue our publike as-  
semblies, to doe it in some part, and to call  
vpon our people to be thankfull to God  
with vs, both in hart, words, and life:  
least the Lord for our vnthankfulnes doe  
returne vpon vs with the same, or some  
other great punishment of his. Which  
we



we haue so much the more cause to feare;  
vntill we thus seeke to preuent it, because  
the late memory of so great a worke, both  
of iustice in sending the plague, and of  
mercy in taking it away, is not so fresh &  
effectuall with all men, nay with very few,  
as it should: but they like to vngratious  
children so soone forget the rodd, as it is  
off their back. And seeing by these your  
Lordship may take knowledge, that by  
your godly incitation many were made  
more painfull in their callings (at the least  
for that time) then otherwise they would  
haue beene, whereby also God was more  
honoured, and the people more instruct-  
ed: your Lordship will according to that  
high place, wherein God hath placed  
you, especially to that end, take all oppor-  
tunities by word and writing still to incite  
all men to be zealous and feruent in the  
worke of the ministry: by giuing all  
good encouragement vnto the painfull la-  
bourers in Gods haruest, and by quick-  
ning vp them that are any way slothfull  
and negligent, and by discountenancing  
them



them that are altogether careles and idle, and by stopping vp the passage vnto al idol shepherds & hirelings, who seeke the fleece and not the flock: whose right arme as it is cleane withred vp, and their right eye viterly darkned so as the Prophet saith they haue neither will, nor abilitie to doe any good in the Church of God. That so not only the gospell may still more and more be purely preached in this your Lordships Dioces, (as now by the grace of God it is, and hath beene a long time by many learned & great men) but that the people in all places may be compelled diligently to frequent it: & not only themselves to yeeld obedience vnto it, but to haue their children & seruants, Zach. 11. 8. Aa. 10. 3. euen their whole families willingly catechised: that they may feare God with all their househoulds. That so we may blesse god, not only for your comming among vs, but much more for your continuance with vs, and ouer vs: and pray to him for you (as we doe, and mind to doe) that the Lord will long preferue you zealous of  
his

ap. 10. 13.

th. 35. 14

th. 1. 19

his glory, and carefull of the good of that  
part of his church, ouer which the holy  
ghost hath made you ouerseer, which al-  
so Iesus Christ hath purchased, not with  
gold or siluer, but with his owne most  
pretious blood. That so among the rest  
of his good and faithfull seruants, who  
haue vsed their talents well, he may give  
you a full reward in the kingdome of  
heauen, who hath said, *if thou loue me  
feed my sheepe, if thou loue me, feed my  
lambes.* For though the daily exercises of  
the word of God should be sufficient of  
themselues, to purchase credit and reue-  
rence to theselues with all sorts of people,  
as to the most holy ordinances of the eter-  
nall God; and the great wantes, that are  
in all men, should driue them to seeke to  
them continually as to the meanes of their  
saluation, whereby all their wantes might  
be supplied: yet such is the irreligion in  
many, and the want of feeling in others,  
that they are no more forward vnto any  
part of Gods seruice, or of the meanes of  
their owne saluation, then authority doth  
compell

compell them. Thus assuring my selfe,  
that your later deedes will be answerable  
to these good beginnings, or rather happy  
proceedings; yea that they will goe farre  
beyond them in all godly zeale, I comfort  
my selfe, with the rest of my brethren in  
the daily expectation and hope of it: pray  
ing to god, that the zeale of his house may *Psal. 69. 9*  
euen consume you: that so you waxing  
old in all well doing, your age may be *Prou. 16. 31*  
so much the more honorable, beeing  
found in the way of righteousness. And so  
not doutibng of your Lordships faueu-  
rable acceptatiō of these my poore endea-  
uours, I leaue them to your fatherly and  
honorable protection, and my selfe, & my  
seruice to your continuall commande-  
ment, very humbly taking my leaue. Nor-  
ton in Suffolke. 30. Aprill. 1604.

Your Lordships euer humbly at  
commandment.

Nicolas Bownd.

719  
918  
To the godly and Chri-  
stian Reader, the daily increase of that  
true godlinesse, which hath the promise  
of the life present, and of that that is  
to come, 1. Tim. 4. 8.

W Hen as of late this holy exer-  
cise of fasting, was by publike  
authoritie, not without iust  
cause imposed vpon vs (we beloue fathers  
and brethren) I thought it conuenient, or  
rather necessarie for that people, which  
then I had to deale with (and haue still)  
first of all to make them acquainted with  
the nature of it, not so much by preaching  
of fasting out of some one text, (which  
could not very fitly haue beene done) as by  
deliuering vnto them in sundrie sermons  
the whole doctrine of it orderly, out of ma-  
ny places of holy Scripture, or rather out  
of the whole word of God indifferently.  
That so they might be the more willing  
to submit themselues vnto it, when they  
did see cleerely what they should doe, and  
also

919  
851  
Also that they doe it in some good measure  
acceptable to God, and comfortably to the  
selues, when they perceaued after what  
manner they should doe it. And thus in ma-  
king of these short treatises and Homilies  
at the first I had respect only vnto them.  
Since considering on the one side the great  
ignorance that is in most places, as of al-  
ther partes of gods service which are ordi-  
nary so most of all this, which is extraordi-  
nary, especially because it is, and hath  
beene so much out of vse: and then waying  
on the other side, that there may be here-  
after great cause offered vnto vs againe  
of using this holy & excellent ordinance  
of god, either publikely in many places, or  
priuately in more, seeing that this visi-  
tation of the plague doth so linger, like vnto  
the leprosy which sometime did hang  
long in the houses of the lewes, and  
soe doth very shortly, or not at all wholly  
depart from some places: besides those new  
chastisements, which we know not how ma-  
ny or how soone they may come vpon vs: I  
thought since, that both for the se, and for o-  
ther



whether causes these my labours might be  
 not wholly unprofitable to all those, that  
 are well minded. And though I cannot be  
 ignorant that there are many and goodly  
 and learned sermons and treatises, both  
 in english and latine, already extant of  
 this argument, and so my inuention af-  
 ter them may seeme superfluous: yet all  
 things considered, I doubt not, but that  
 some may stand in neede of these also. For  
 as I must needes confesse, that I haue read  
 the former, & inuentioned to follow some  
 of the: so I leaue the learned sort to such  
 of them, as themselves shall best like: only  
 this for the more ignorant sort I haue ay-  
 med at, to make the whole doctrine of fas-  
 ting easy and plaine, that they might with  
 facility vnderstand, what god requireth of  
 them in the day of fast, and how they ought  
 to behaue themselves therein: And to that  
 end I haue set downe euery thing orderly,  
 & at large, & therefore the more clearly  
 and not scholastically and shortly (as some  
 haue done) and by that meanes the more  
 obscurely, especially vnto the vulgar sort:

and

and I haue shewed the practise of euery particular, out of the Scripture, setting downe at large the wordes of euery text for the capacity of the simplest, and oftentimes for the more easines and plainnes, hauing recourse of purpose to the selfe same texts, rather then making choise of new, which vainly might happily haue bread some obscuritie. which kind of writing if it may seeme to bring tediousnes vnto the learned eares, they must consider, that first I preached these sermons to the meaner sort, men not brought vp in learning and so did apply my selfe in handling of this doctrine vnto their capacity, leading them on in it according to their owne pace (which is rightly to diuide the word of God: and in his house (as a wise steward) to giue vnto euery one of them their owne food in due season:) and since, euen as they were then preached, I haue published them for their sakes especially, and so haue deliuered them as milke, for all those that are but babes and children in Christ. And therefore if any of these

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To the Reader.

shall receiue any benefite by them, I haue attained vnto the end of my labours, though the other sort be not holpen by them one whit. For which I will pray vnto God, euen as I desire all you, to whome these presents shall come, to pray for me: and the Lord heare vs all for our selues, and one of vs for an other: and his well beloued sonne Iesus Christ our only mediator for vs all: that we may liue and dye in his faith and in his feare: that so the same Christ may be vnto vs life, and in death aduantage. Norton, in Suffolke.

Your louing brother in the Lord

Nicolas Bownd.

# THE GENERAL

## *Contents of the whole booke,*

which may serue for an alphabeticall table, to finde out euery thing handled in the same.

Page, 1.

### The 1. Homilie

*Sheweth, that the exercise of fasting is not an humane constitution, but an ordinance of God, approoned in the old and new Testament, and so how God requireth it of vs at this present, and for what causes.*

Pag. 26.

### The 2. Homilie

*Sheweth, what are the parts whereof this fasting consisteth, and first, which be outward belonging to the bodie, and to what ende they serue, as to abstaine wholly for a time from all kinde of meate and drinke, and sleepe, and costly apparell, and such like comforts of the bodie: and yet what libertie we haue then in all these in times of necessitie.*

## The 3. Homilie

*Intreateth of the inward vertues of the minde  
to be attained vnto, & professed in fasting;  
without the which the outward abstinence  
is nothing worth: namely of true humili-  
tie and casting downe of our selues before  
God, and wherein that consisteth, and how  
necessary it is, and by what meanes we may  
attaine vnto it.*

## The 4. Homilie

*Continueth to intreat of the inward vertues  
of the minde; and namely of the hope that  
we should haue of the pardon of our sinnes;  
vpon our true repentance: and that God  
will giue vs the things that we seeke to him  
for: which hope must stirre vs vp to seruent  
and long prayer, and how by importunitie  
we shall preuaile with God; & what things  
els may quicken vs vnto seruent pray-  
er.*



Page, 133.

The 5. Homilie

Doth further intreat of fervency of prayer, requisite in fasting: and to the end we may consider, what great things God hath promised to fasting and prayer; and how he hath performed the same, not only to the goodly, but even to the wicked, who have thereby obtained great deliverances: yea how men by humble supplication have prevailed with men, even with their enemies.

Page, 168.

The 6 Homilie

Sheweth what is the proper time for fasting, namely, the time of affliction and sorrow: & then how God requireth it, and his servants have practised it; and so how the Lord requireth it of us in this time of our sorrow, and how long the time of a fast should continue: and how the same time should be spent.

Page, 208.

The 7. Homilie

Intreateth of the severall kindes or sorts of

## The Contents.

fasts, whereof the one is priuate, and the other publike: and first of priuate fastings, and how to behaue our selues in them: and how they ought to be intertaind into mens houses: and for what causes; and what great good may come thereby: and what liberty the Gouvernors haue in appointing of them aboue all the rest of the familie.

## Page, 253. The 8. homilie

*Intreateth of the second kind of fasts, which are publike: and why so called: and how all sorts ought to come to them: and what a great fault it is for any to be absent: And then of the cause of them, which is the wrath of God against his Church: either present, as it is now upon vs: or likely to come: which the godly haue considered in the course of Gods prouidence, and so haue sought by fasting and praier to preuent it, and not alwaies taried till it came upon them.*

Page. 200.  
The 9. Homilie.

*Continueth to shew the causes of publike fastes,  
namely when the wrath of God is come  
hath beene iustly feared, in respect of the  
great sinnes, that haue abounded and of  
the iudgement of God, denounced against  
the same openly by the ministers of God.  
And when Gods wrath hath not only beene  
upon themselves, but upon others of their  
brethren, the children of God.*

Pag. 353.

A direction for Prayer:  
*Fit and conuenient for all  
those, that being ignorant  
or vnacquainted with pri-  
uate prayer, are desirous  
to pray by themselves.*

...the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...  
... the ... of ...

Page 33.  
A direction for Prayer:  
First and convenient for all  
those that being ignorant  
or unacquainted with our  
most precious and glorious  
to pray by themselves.



The holie exercise of  
Fasting described out of  
the word of God.

HOMIL. I.

*The first Homilie sheweth, that the exercise of fasting is not an humane constitution, but an ordinance of God, approved in the old and newe Testament, and so how God requireth it of vs at this present, and for what causes.*



Right wel-beloued in the Lord, whereas we haue beene of late commanded by the Kings most excellent Maiesty, and that not without iust cause, to meete once a weeke vpon the Wednesday, to be occupied in fasting and praier: because that the thing it selfe hath

*The occasion  
of this Treas-  
ure.*

B

beene



beene so long out of vse, that a great number haue little or not at all practised it, yea they haue not so much as beene acquainted with the doctrine of it, and so do almost not know, what it meaneth: I thought it my bound dutie first of all to God, and then to you (committed to my charge) in one part of the day at the least (during this time of fasting) to intreat of the thing it selfe, that so you might know how to behaue your selues in it, and the longer that we shall continew it, (as hauing more knowledge of it) to be the better prepared for it.

Heere then first of all that we might doe this that we doe, not onely in obedience to our Lord and King, but especially & most of all in faith, vnto God, without which nothing (yea though it be good) can please him, as the apostle saith, we must be perswaded, that this order of fasting is not a thing deuised by man: but appointed of God, and commanded in his holy word: and therefore

1. Cor. 11. 6.  
Fasting is  
not deuised  
of man, but  
commanded  
of God.

therefore that which he doth necessarily require at the hands not onely of others, but euen of our selues. And this we had need to be perswaded of the rather, because that some neuer thinke themselves bounde vnto it, and so make no difference of times either for fasting or for feasting, but (if they haue wherewithall) all times are alike vnto them for eating, or not eating.

But *Solomon* the wise sheweth, that to Ecc1.3.1. all things there is an appointed time, and a time to euerie purpose vnder the heauen, and so there is a time, wherein we are as well commanded to fast, as we haue liberty to feast: and therefore as *Efra* and the *Leuites* would not Nehem.8. 10.11. haue the people to fast & weepe then,

but rather to eat and reioice when it was a time of ioy: So the Prophet *Esay* findeth fault with some of his Esay 32. 12.13. time, who when the Lord called them

by his worde and punishments vnto fasting, they fell to feasting, and so there was (as he said) killing of sheepe,

and oxen, eating and drinking. And so neither of them knew what was fit for their seuerall times: we must therefore be perswaded, that as there are times, in which God of his great mercy giueth vs liberty to feast, and to vse his creatures, not onely for necessitie sparingly, but for delight abundantly, as at marriages and other times of reioicing: so there is a time also, when he would haue vs not onely eate temperately, (which we must doe alwaies, euen at feasts, that wee fall not to surfiting and drunkenness, but euen to abstaine wholly from meat and drink, and all other comforts of this life, to those blessed endes, for which he hath ordained it.

the Iewes  
had a stan-  
ding fast  
serely.  
Leu. 16. 29.

To this end wee may remember, what is written concerning fasting in the booke of *Leuiticus*, and namely how there it is said, that the Lord commaunded the Iewes once a yeere, that euery soule should humble it selfe with fasting before the Lorde in one  
of

of the great assemblies: where *Moses* sheweth or rather the Lord by him, that this fast should be kept perpetually once a yeere, and in what moneth, and what day of the moneth, and to what end, namely to humble themselves for their sinnes, and therefore what must then be done, *viz* that they must abstaine from all worke and worldly businesse, and be occupied in all exercise of Gods worship, as vpon the Sabbath day, and that the Priest should make attonement by praier to obtaine remission of their sinnes. And the same commandement is set downe againe in as many wordes in the 23. *Leu. 23. 2* chapter of the same booke, where he sheweth that all were bounde to it, and that they should then lay aside all their wordly businesse, and haue an holy conuocation and therein haue sacrifices and praier, that it might be a Sabbath vnto them, as all fastes are of the nature of the Sabbathes, sauing that in them they abstaine from meat.

and then all things are done to an other end, euen that there might be great humiliation in them for their sinnes, (which two are not so proper vnto the Sabbath) and so vpon their repentance God might be reconciled vnto them, and spare them; which are most excellent ends of fasting, and a great fruit of that worke, which might prouoke all vnto it, and none might repent them of their labour.

And in these places though there be no mention of abstaining from meate and drinke, and so they may seeme not to appertaine to this argument of fasting, yet besides that all learned men doe thus take them, that this was a day of yeerely fasting, euen the verie circumstance also of the text doth necessarily lead vs vnto this interpretation; for when he not onely makes it a daie of abstaining from al worke, and spending it wholly in Gods seruice publicly, but also that the end of it should be, that they might be humbled for  
their



their sins, & so reconciled vnto God, & this humbling of their souls is principally vrged: and we know that the humbling of the body is a meanes to humble the soule, and the body is specially humbled and brought downe by abstaining from meate and drinke and other comforts of it: and besides we finde by practise in the Scripture, that in other times of great humiliati- on, the seruants of God haue abstained from these things; therefore wee may be assured that this is ment in these places, and that this was their practise, that vpon this day they abstaining from meat and drinke, did thus also cease from worke, and were occupied in Gods worship to this end, euen to the humbling of themselues before the Lord: and so this was the thing that was commaunded them yeerely to doe, euen to keepe a daie of fast.

And there was great reason of it, *There was great reason of it.*  
for in the yeere many great sins might  
be

be committed of al sorts, which might iustly prouoke Gods wrath against them, and so they had great cause to be humbled for them: and once in the yeere God might shew some tokens of his displeasure, in some of his punishments, as by raising vp some enemies against them, by sending sicknes, scarcitie, vnseasonable weather and such like; therefore they might thinke that once in the yeere at the least, there was cause for them thus to humble themselves, especially when God had cōmanded them so to do. For though they should thus humble themselves continually for their sinnes, as they fell out, yet to helpe their infirmitie they had a set time appointed for it, to doe it more thorowly. For as they had the Sabbath giuen them, that once a weeke they might wholly rest from their labors, and attend vpon the worship of God for their good; though they should euery day redeeme the time, and as they had their daily sacrifices

fices morning and euening, and so times for praier. So heere though all should continually be humbled for their sinnes priuate, and mourne for them that were publike, when they saw any tokens of Gods displeasure; yet to helpe their infirmitie heerein, they had a solemne day appointed for this purpose, that the time it selfe might not onely put them in minde of that, which otherwise would haue beene forgotten of the most, or not so seriously thought vpon: but also further them therein. And as we finde by experience how needful it is to haue a Sabbath to put vs in minde of, and to further vs in Gods seruice: ( for how few doe it at all, or as they should vpon the weeke daies; and then what would they doe, if there were no Sabbath at all.) So the godly no doubt in those daies did finde by their owne experience, that though they had oftentimes cause in respect of their sinnes, and the punishment of them to fast  
publikely

publikely and priuately, yet if they had had no set time appointed for it, they should verie often haue failed in so necessarie a dutie: euen as we see among our selues, that because we haue no such times appointed for vs, that verie few though they haue great cause, do practise it at any time. Therefore this was Gods goodnesse to that people, to giue them such a commandement.

How farre  
be equity  
of that law  
bindeth vs.

Now though the ceremony of the yeerely day be taken away, as many other solemne daies of theirs are yet the thing it selfe, that is Fasting, is not taken away: for though we be not tied to that yeerly day, yet we are bound at somtimes to fast, and that by vertue of that cōmandement giuen to them, as well as they were. For if we consider the end, and see the equitie and reason of it, we shall finde that it bindes vs as much as them; and so we hauing the same cause among vs, which mooued the Lord to inioine them this practise, must thinke, that we haue the same  
com-

commandement also of fasting: thogh not at that time, and yeerely, yet at some time in a yeere, at the least in many yeeres. For it being ordained to this end, that they being humbled for their sinnes priuate and publike, and there testifying their humiliation, the wrath of God against them either threatned iustly in the lawe, or vpon them already, or appearing & imminent, might be turned away, and so they reconciled vnto God, and spared: we haue the same cause to bee humbled manie waies, especially at this present, and so now God commandeth vs to vse it: And first of all in respect of our great vnwoorthinesse of Gods manifold benefits: for looke to them that be publike, past and present, as the long, and happie, and peaceable raigze of our late soueraigne Queene *Elizabeth* of famous memorie, with the Gospell, and freedome from our enemies, and other plagues: and then consider, on the other side the little fruit of them,

the

*To be humbled both in respect of the death of our late Queen Elizabeth.*



the great vnthankfulnesse for them, nay abuse for them, and of Gods patience in them, and we shall see great cause of humilitie, and of earnest seeking to God for the continuance of them by fasting and praier: especially if we well way the late great losse of ours in the death of her Maiestie.

. Sam. 1.

4

For if *Dauid* bad the people of his time mourne for the death of *Saul* their King, because they enioyed manie great benefits vnder his gouernment, saying, Ye daughters of Israel weepe for *Saul*, which clothed you in scarlet and with pleasures, and hanged ornaments of golde vpon your apparell: then we much more haue cause to lament for her death, by whose life we enioyed and that so long so many inestimable benefits both for soule and bodie, for profit and for pleasure: and truly it is to be feared, that her death is too lightly passed away of the most. The Lord indeed in much mercy hath most happily supplied it beyond all our expectation,

expectation, but yet that must not be forgotten; and the more graciously and speedily he hath supplied it, and yet we vnwoorthy of the former, the more cause haue wee to be humbled. For when many great benefits come heaped vp one after another, and no measure of true thankfulnesse and obedience answerable vnto it, there must needs come some great punishment afterwards, if it be not preuented. And so the sight and consideration of these great benefits thus continued, with the little or no fruit at all of them, should humble vs, and so driue vs to shew it in fasting and prayer, that God might forgie vs, and so still continue his benefits.

Besides this, if they vpon this day had cause to bee humbled for their *And in respect of our* sinnes, and for the punishment of them *sinnes.* either present or imminent; then if our sinnes be as great, and many, or more than theirs, because we haue more and greater benefits (for his VVord in the ministry

Luke 12.48.

ministry of the Gospel is more cleere-  
ly come to vs, and this time hath many  
things which the time of the Law had  
not) then seeing to whom much is gi-  
uen, of them much is required: we ha-  
uing receiued so much in comparison  
of them, and done so little for it, haue  
more cause to be humbled than they,  
and so are bound by vertue of this law  
to holde some dayes of humiliation as  
well as they, though not that yeerely  
day; especially if we consider the pu-  
nishment not onely to be feared, but  
alreadie vpon vs. For though God  
hath giuen vs a most gracious and  
worthy Prince, yet see how there hath  
beene feare of losing him by the despe-  
rate attempts of his traiterous enemies:  
whom thogh in their plot it hath plea-  
sed God to disapoint, and we hope,  
and pray that he alwayes so will, yet he  
hath suffered them somewhat to breake  
out, that all might take knowledge of  
them, to be humbled for their sinnes,  
the cause of them. For he is not King  
for

for himselfe, but for vs; in his preservation consisteth all our good; in his death the losse of vs all: especially when they seeke also to put out his whole race, and to bring in some Popish, Spanish pretended heire: then consider the losse of Religion, and the more than hazzard, yea vtter overthrow of our peace, and all that we haue, we should come vnder the popish and Spanish yoke, either of which were intolerable, as our forefathers haue learned by too lamentable experience: therefore in respect of this also we haue cause to be humbled, and so to fast, both to bring vs to it, and outwardly to declare it.

Moreouer if we consider the great sicknes and mortality, that raigneth, & hath done a long time in most of the chiefe places in the land, as in London where haue died 2000. this last weeke and more; and truly this is much, considering, how many haue remooued out of this citie, and how many haue died

*And this present pestilence that is in many parts of this land.*

died before: so that it is reported, that there are certaine hundred houses standing emptie: besides in most of the villages about London, and in other cities and great townes, as in Norwich, and in manie coast townes, and other in Norfolke and Suffolke, as Yarmouth, Laystaffe, Ipswich, &c. that I speake not of those which are in other shires, as Colchester, Cambridge, Newmarket, and many more, that we know not. If there were nothing but this, there were great cause to be humbled, for so manifest a token of Gods wrath, so apparently, and so vniuersally, and so long shewed. And this mooued the Kings Maiestie, of his Princely care, that he hath of all his subiects, to set downe this godly order of weekly fasting. For concerning our selues, though by the free mercy of God it be not vpon vs yet, yet these are our brethren, and therefore as the Apostle saith,) we should be of like affectiō one towards another,



another, and so ready to weepe with them that weepe. Besides, as our Saviour Christ saith of them, vpon whom the tower of Siloam fell, & slew them: that they were not the greatest sinners, aboue all that dwelt in Ierusalem, so must wee say of these men and women, that haue died of the plague, and of those places where it hath beene, and is so heauie; but except we amend, we shall all likewise perish: therefore wee in them, as in a glasse, are to see, what we haue deserued, and so for our owne selues to be humbled also: considering that this punishment of God vpon them for their sinnes, (deserued also by vs) is contagious, and so may easely spread euen vnto vs quickly, by them that come from the places infected, as thus it hath come to manie places a farre off already. Therefore in respect of all these we are bounde by Gods law to giue our selues to fasting and praier: as well as the Iewes were, though we be not tied to that moneth

10 The day of fasting ROM. 1.  
and to that daie.

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moniall  
of the  
es fast  
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ed, yet fa-  
sting remai-  
neth still.

For euen as, though the Iewish Sabbath be taken away, which was vpon the Satterday, yet whether wee consider the end of fasting, or of sanctifying a day of rest, we are stil bound to keepe one in seuen, and this one that we doe, and wee haue as much need of it, as the Iewes had: so we may say of the day of fasting, though that prescript day be taken away, yet if we consider the endes and causes of it, namely to humble vs for our sinnes, we are bounde to it still vpon some daies, and haue as much need of it as euer they had: Therefore we must be perswaded, that now God doth require it of vs, and not onely the king, and so let vs doe it in obedience vnto him principally, and conscience of our dutie.

Thus we see also, what we ought to haue done, and what God required of vs often heeretofore, though we haue neglected it; when wee haue seene sin abound,

abound, threatning Gods iudgement, yea when wee haue seene and felt his punishment vpon vs, in vnseasonable weather, in scarcitie and deere yeeres, in the time of common sicknesse, in the feare of our enemies, in traitors at home, and such like: which if we had vsed more, as we had occasion, and the time called vs vnto it, we might haue looked for greater blessings, and many punishments had not lien so long vpon the people. But that that we haue failed in before, let vs now make a supply of: and to that end let vs farther consider, what prooffe we haue more, that God requireth it of vs.

If this yeerely day vpon these grounds, that we haue heard, be not sufficient to bind vs, then let vs remember, that besides it, they had other mooueable & vncertaine fastes, which were holden at diuers times vpon sundrie occasions: that we seeing how we haue the like occasions among vs, might knowe, that wee haue the like

*The Iewes had other mooueable fasts vpon sundry occasions.*

el. 2. 12.

commanded  
by the Lord.

commandement from God to doe, as they did, and so should fall into the like practise, and not to thinke it to be a thing commanded onely by man, and so indifferent, and therefore that a man may choose, whether he will vse it, or leaue it. To this end consider, what is written by the Prophet *Ioel*, *cap. 2*. Therefore now the Lorde saith, turne you vnto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: where he telleth them plainly, that at that very time God commanded them to fast: in the former part of that Chapter hee had put them in minde of a great punishment of God, that was vpon the fruits of the earth by caterpillers and such like vermine, and then sheweth them, what God required of them in such a case, as the onely remedie, euen to humble themselues for their sinnes the cause of it, and to seeke to him with fasting and praier, and therefore saith, that God commanded them so to do:  
If

If then this was done by the commandement of God vpon such an occasion, then may wee be assured also, that other publike fasts, that we reade of in the Scriptures vpon the like occasions, had the like commandement from God, though it bee not in expresse wordes so set downe: For if when the fruits of the earth were destroyed, he commandeth them in the name of God to fast, as the onely remedie to be holpen: then may we be assured, that we are commanded not onely by the king, which is sufficient to binde all men, but by God himselfe to doe as we doe, when not the fruits of the earth so much, as men for whom they were made, by this pestilence and hand of God are destroyed in great number.

Thus *Dauid* by the wisdom of gods spirit according to the equitie of his law, did see, that he had great cause to fast, when he heard of the overthrow that the Israelites had by the

*By the same  
reason God  
commandeth  
vs to fast  
this preface  
2 Sam. i.*



Philistims, and so himselfe and his companie did fast for that great losse: accounting as it is written: They mourned, and wept, and fasted vntill euen for *Saule*, and for *Jonathan* his sonne, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were slaine with the sword: if he saw that God required it of him, when the people were slaine by men, then ought we to beleeue that he requireth it of vs also, when so manie are slaine by his owne hande, and he hath not yet cealed, but his arme is stretched out still, as the Prophet saith.

9.12.21. In like maner *Iehosaphat* the king of Iudah, when the Ammonites and the Moabites, and they of mount Seir came against him, and his people, he being but in feare of some destruction, proclaimed a generall fast, & by praier sought vnto the Lorde, and thought it his bounde dutie to doe so, as it is  
 1.20.3 saide. Hee feared, and set himselfe to seeke the Lord, and proclaimed a fast through-

throughout all Iudah : then we much more haue good cause to doe , as wee doe , and this fast , that is now euerie where obserued by publike authoritie , is done vpon good ground , euen by the commandement of almightie God. When besides the iust cause to feare for the time to come , we heare of so great destruction in many places alreadie. The like may be said of all other fastes obserued in Gods worde , namely , that they haue bene taken vp , not as a voluntarie or wil-worship , that it should be saide of them , who Isa. 1.12. hath required these things at your hands ? but as a necessarie obedience vnto the commandement of God , though not giuen vnto them in expresse words , yet necessarily gathered frō the equitie of his law. As also in the *Hester* , when *Haman* the Iewes aduersarie sought their ruine and ouerthrow , they to preuent it , sought to humble themselves before God for their sinnes , and therefore gaue them-  
C 4 selves

selues to fasting; (as God requireth in such cases, both that therby we might be humbled, and also that it might appeare, that we were so indeed: ) and this they did, because the case was very extraordinarie, when the destruction of the whole church of God was sought at once: So we may thinke that in so great calamity as this, not in one, but in many places, and so not in one but in many partes of the Church of God, God requireth of vs, that we should humble our selues in fasting, some one day, or other.

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Gospell  
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8.33.

Last of all, that we might be perswaded that God requireth fasting of vs as well as of our forefathers, of the Gentiles as well as of the Iewes, vnder the Gospell as well as in the time of the Law : we shall see that it hath warrant in such cases as these, as well from the New Testament as from the Olde. As when Christ was challenged for this, That his Disciples did not fast, though *John* and his Disciples did often : hee doth

doth so defend them, that he doth not wholly put it away from them, as though they were not bound to it in the time of the Gospell; but sheweth, that as yet they were dispensed with, because Christ Iesus the bridegroom was with them, and so it was a time of ioy; but the time should come, when he should be taken from them, & great affliction should befall them, then hee requireth fasting of them, saying, The dayes wil come, when the bridegroom Luk. 5. 35 shalbe taken from them, then shal they fast in those daies: commanding them and all other, euen vnder the Gospell in the time of great affliction to fast. This time of the Pestilence is a time of great sorrow, & of great affliction, therefore now by the Olde and New Testament wee are bound to it. And so this may be sufficient to certifie the consciences of all (that are not euill disposed) That to serue God in fasting and prayer is a thing that he requireth of vs: and so if there were no commandement

mandement from men to inioyne vs,  
yet the authoritie of his Word in the  
Olde and New Testament, and the  
practises of his seruants vpon the same  
ground should compell vs vnto it.

### HOMIL. II.

*The second Homilie sheweth what are the  
parts whereof this fasting consisteth,  
and first, which be outward belonging  
to the body, and to what end they serue,  
as to abstaine wholly for a time from all  
kinde of meat and drinke, and sleepe,  
and costly apparell, and such like com-  
fortes of the bodie: and yet what liber-  
tie we haue then in all these in times of  
necessitie.*



Being thus persuaded of  
the necessitie of this ho-  
lie exercise of fasting, by  
good and sound reasons  
from the Olde and New  
Testament, and that it is our duetie to  
obserue it, and that the Lord requireth  
it



it at our hands; it remaineth, that I should further declare, wherein this blessed ordinance of fasting consisteth, and what are the parts and nature of it: that we being willing to obey God in this dutie, might not erre of ignorance, <sup>1. Cor. 1</sup> and so not only obtaine nothing at his <sup>30</sup> hand thereby, but pul his heavy iudgement vpon vs for abusing it. For as the Apostle sayeth of the abuse of the Sacrament of the Lords supper among the Corinthians, For this cause many are weake and sicke among you, and many sleepe; and so that which in it selfe rightly vsed was a means of health for soule and bodie, was by their ignorance and abuse the cause of manie grieuous diseases & mortalitie among them, so it might come to passe, that whereas by this meanes wee seeke to pacifie the wrath of God alreadie broken out against vs (which also we shall do in time, if it be rightly vsed) for the neglect or abuse of it, or both, the Plague should not onely not stay, but

we

we should further prouoke the Lord to strike vs.

isting con-  
sisteth of two  
parts.

1

2

Tim. 4. 8.

This exercise therefore of fasting consisteth of two parts; the one is outward, the other inward: the outward appertaineth to the body, and is called a Bodily exercise, as to abstaine from meat, drinke, sleepe, and such like; which of it selfe without the other is nothing worth, though commanded of God: the other is belonging to the soule, and consisteth in the inward vertues and graces of the minde holpen forward by this bodily exercise: and this simply, and in it owne nature is profitable, as hauing the promises of this life and of the life to come. And of both these the Apostle writeth vnto *Timothie*, saying, Exercise thy selfe vnto godlinesse, for bodilie exercise profiteth little, but godlinesse is profitable vnto all things, which hath the promise of the life present, and of that that is to come. Where he saith, that godlinesse, and the pure worship of God, consisting

consisting in the inward graces of the minde: as in humility, faith, repentance, &c. is profitable in it owne nature: but fasting and all such exercises of the bodie, and austeritie of life is so farre forth profitable, as they farther vs in these. Therefore as the whole man consisteth of soule and bodie, but the soule is most principall, so doth this exercise of fasting consist of these two parts, whereof this later appertaining to the soule, is the cheefe. And as in the sanctification of the Sabbath there are two things, the one to rest from all bodily labour, (appertaining to the bodie) the other to sanctifie that time of rest (belonging chiefly to the soule) which is the principall end of the other: So in fasting there are these two things to be considered, the one to abstaine from all food, (which directly concerneth the body) the other is the end, why we vse that abstinence, which is to further our soules in godlinesse, which is the chiefest of all, and  
giueth

giueth life to the other, euen as the soule doth to the body. Therefore though abstinence be necessarily required, yet that is not all, nay it is the least part of this holy exercise, though the whole action haue the name of that, as being most subiect to the outward sense (& so best knowen) for it is called fasting: as in keeping holy the Sabbath day, to rest is the least part of our dutie therein, yet the whole daie hath the name of that, for it is called the Sabbath, this is the daie of rest.

*The first  
part belon-  
geth to the  
body, and  
consisteth in  
the absti-  
nence from  
all comfort  
of the same.*

First then we are to consider what is the outward ceremonie in fasting, and the bodily exercise: and then what be the inward vertues to be adioined vnto it, and to which end the other is vndertaken. The former is an abstinence for a time wholly from all the commodities and pleasures of this life, thereby to make vs fitter for the inward graces of the minde: as to abstaine from meat, and drinke, & sleepe, and such like, that the bodie being thereby

thereby humbled and pulled downe,  
 the mind thereby might be humbled  
 and cast downe also in it selfe before  
 God. So that this outward abstinence  
 is therfore cōmanded, that we might  
 feele in our soules, and in feeling out-  
 wardly might professe, that we are vn-  
 woorthie for our sinnes either of life,  
 or of any thing that belongeth to the  
 vpholding of it, and therefore we doe  
 willingly for a time bereaue our selues  
 of the vse of them. So that vpon this,  
 and such like daies, we ought to ab-  
 staine from al comforts of the body to  
 these ends, both that we might there-  
 by the better feele the deserued misery  
 of our sinnes, euen that we are worthy  
 of death, and also that we might out-  
 wardly declare, and by this practise  
 professe the same.

Now whereas it may seeme vnto  
 carnall men, & such as measure things  
 onely by reason, that this outward ab-  
 stinence is a thing of no value, and  
 such as God regardeth not, neither  
 are

*26. God be-  
 ing a spirit  
 regardeth  
 not these  
 outward  
 thing.*



are wee to ascribe any vertue to that at all, seeing the Lord is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit, and in truth; & again, forasmuch as in themselves meate and drinke are indifferent things, by vsing or leauing them they cannot make vs better or worse: for the kingdom of God consisteth not in meate and drinke, but in righteousnesse, peace, and ioy of the holic Ghost, and therefore he that eateth or  
Rom. 14. 17. eateth not, hath neither more or lesse, and, and so is neither neerer the kingdom of God, nor further of from it  
1. Cor. 8. 8. by either of them. And if Christ said, that that goeth into a man defileth not the man, then to abstaine, that cannot sanctifie a man, and so if a man fast, he is neuer a whit the holier, and if he fast not, he is neuer a whit the woorse: and thus vpon such foolish conceits men should make light account of this holy ordinance of God, and wholly neglect it, as too manie doe.

For answer vnto all these, and such like, we must remember that fasting is the Lords ordinance, and that he doth command, that wee should thus abstaine, as hath beene prooued in the former Homilie out of the old & new Testament, therefore wee must not leaue it vndone, but thinke our selues bound vnto it: Secondly God that hath commanded it, will also accept of it, and giue it a blessing to all those that in feare and obedience shall vse it: and thirdly he hauing ordeined it to a most excellent end, euen to humble the soule, hee will make it prosperous to them to this end: euen as water in Baptisme, and bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord are nothing in themselues; nor rest vpon the Sabbath, if it bee considered in it selfe; yet all these being ordained of God, haue a great blessing to them that vse them in reuerence and in faith.

Furthermore, seeing this outward abstinence is appointed to this ende,

D

to

*Answer.*

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and hath  
commanded  
for the  
humbling  
of our soules.  
eu. 16. 29.

Cor. 11.  
16.

and by fa-  
cing we are  
greatly fur-  
thered in  
the humi-  
tie.

to further vs in true humilitie and af-  
fliction of our soules, as hath beene  
shewed out of *Leuit. 16.* where it is  
precisely and in expresse words requi-  
red, that euery one should humble his  
soule vpon that day: and so appointed  
to this end, that otherwise we cannot  
attaine vnto it in that measure that  
we should (for then had God appoin-  
ted it in vaine, which once to imagine  
were most horrible blasphemie) in re-  
spect of this, God doth require it, and  
we cannot without neglecting of the  
inward vertue refuse the outward ex-  
ercise. For as the Sacrament is appoin-  
ted to that end, that thereby we might  
effectually remember Christes death,  
according as it is written, Doe this in  
remembrance of me, and so wee are  
bound to vse it continually vnto his  
comming againe, and vse it to that  
end, that thereby as by an outward  
signe we might remember him, and  
without this wee cannot remember  
him as often, and as we should: So  
the

the very abstinence from meate and drinke being appointed of God to further vs in some inward vertues, which otherwise we cannot attaine vnto, or not in that measure, though it be an outward bodily thing, yet commaunded of God, and commanded to these endes, we are not onely bounde vnto it, but we must belecue, that it is acceptable vnto God, and will greatlie further vs. For (as the Apostle writeth 1. Cor. 9. 25 to the Corinthians) Euery man that prooueth masteries, abstaineth from all things: that is, those, which rather run in a race, or wrestle for the best game, were woont to abstaine from all such things, as might either hinder their exercises, or make them lesse able to performe them with praise, and whatsoever strength or agilitie they had for this purpose in their armes or legges, or any part of their bodie, yet they neglected not this abstinence, and found by experience, that it did greatly profit them, for the better brething,

and othewise inabling of them to the performing of those exercises with the best commendations: And may not we then be assured much more, that that abstinence, which the Lord hath appointed, for the better fitting of vs to the spirituall wrestling with the sinfull lustes of our fleshly mindes, as vnbeleefe, deadnesse, and dulnesse, hardnesse of heart, want of feeling of our sinnes and the deserued punishments of them; priuie pride, want of feruencie in praier, and such like, shall greatly further vs to these endes, euen to preuaile against them? and though we had greater strength of the spirit, then we haue, yet by this abstinence wee shall finde all things in vs greatlie furthered for this spirituall warfare.

*By fasting  
we shall stop  
the mouthes  
of the pa-  
pists, who  
challenge vs  
for the neg-  
lect of it.*

And besides this there is another fruit of our abstinence, which is none of the least, euen that by thus vsing of it, we shall stoppe the mouthes of our aduersaries the papists; who falsely boast that all fasting was in their religion,



gion, and since the preaching of the Gospell came vp, men haue giuen it ouer, as though they did open a window to all licentiousnesse of eating and drinking. Wherin, though themselves were altogether void of the right maner of fasting prescribed in Gods worde, (as shall appeere more fully heereafter) and so should haue pulled out the great beame first that was in their owne eie, before they medled with the mote, that was in ours, according to the counsell of our Sauour Christ: yet we cannot denie, Math. 7. that we haue giuen them too iust occasion of their slander, because wee haue not vsed it publikely and priuately as often, as we should. But againe for our defence we must remember what Christ said in the defence of his Luk. 5. 34 Disciples: Can yee make the children of the wedding chamber fast as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the daies will come, euen when the Bridegroom shall be taken frō them,

then shall they fast in those daies. Besides, no man putteth a peece of a new cloath into an old vesture, for then the newe renteth it, and the peece taken out of the newe agreeth not with the old. God blessing this time of the Gospell with sundry great benefits did many times dispense with vs, as being a time of ioy and of the Bridegroomes presence: and a great many for their ignorance were altogither vnfit for it, and so in that respect were priuileged from it for a time. But now seeing the Lord requireth it of vs, more then euer he did in our time (for we haue not knowen so great a plague) why should we not now by the practise of fasting, both for our owne good, and to stop the mouthes of our enemies, and that the Gospell might bee well spoken of, take away such occasions? Thus though fasting be but an outward bodilie exercise, yet being commanded of God, he doth and will accept of it; and tending to the humbling of vs it shall

shall be profitable to that end : and we ought to vse it also , that we might deliuer the Gospell from that slander , which by the too great abuse of their libertie in eating and drinking carnall men haue brought vpon it , as that it should be a doctrine of licentiousnesse , and of pampering the flesh.

Now let vs consider wherein this abstinence doth consist ; and that may partly be vnderstood by that that hath beene sayd of it alreadie. Heere then first of all commeth to be considered the abstinence from meat and drinke , which because it is one of the principall outward obseruations , the whole exercise tooke the name of that ; for it is called Fasting : and not onely in our vulgar tongue but in other. And besides , that the nature of the word doth signifie so much , the whole practise of the Church of God in the Olde and New Testament doth sufficiently declare that this is a principall thing in this ordinance of God , Vtterly to re-

*Fasting consisteth in abstaining from all meat and drinke for a time.*

na. 3. 7.

Sam. 12.

. 17.

Ezra. 10. 6.

fraine for a time from all kinds of meats and drinkes whatsoener. For so is it sayd of that fast which the King of *Nineue* caused to be proclaimed thorow-out all that citie, Let neither man, nor beast, bullocke nor sheepe taste anie thing, neither feed nor drinke water : where man & beast, vpon both which this fast was imposed, are forbidden all food and water, and not so much as to taste of them. So is it sayd of *Dauid*, when he fasted and prayed for the life of his child begotten in adulterie, That he would not eat any thing during that time, though the Elders & chiefe men of his house did persuaade him thereunto : for these are the words of the text, That *Dauid* besought God for the childe, and fasted : then the Elders of his house arose to come vnto him, and to cause him to rise from the ground ; but he would not, neither did he eate meat with them. And so it is sayd of *Ezra* the Scribe, when he fasted and praied, & mourned for the sins of them that

that had returned from the captivity, euen for the strange wiues that were among them, he did neither eate bread, nor drinke water : so he did wholly abstaine from all food, euen from that that was common, as bread and water. And to conclude, this is that which Queene *Hester* willed *Mordecai* to Hest. 4. 16. command the Iews, when they should fast and pray for her, that shee might finde fauour with the King in that sute which she should make for them : Fast yee for mee, and eate not, nor drinke. So the right fasting prescribed in the Word, is not a sober vse of meates, And is not a  
sober or spare  
kinde of  
diet. which must be alwaies, nor yet a more sparing diet than at other ordinarie times, and so to eat but a little, but an vtter abstaining from euening to euening from all meat and drinke whatsoever : therefore when wee profess to keepe a fast, thus must we do.

Whereby it appeareth, that the Popish fasts, which they so greatly boasted of, were nothing lesse than that  
true



*The abuse  
of Popish  
fastes in  
permitting  
fulnesse of  
meat vpon  
their fasting  
dayes.*

true fast, which the Scripture teacheth, and which we must practise : for they brake it diuers wayes, both in fulnesse, & also in all delicacie of meats, which they permit vnto themselves in great measure, euen vp on their fasting daies: and first of all they offended in superfluitie and fulnesse, for that it was lawfull vpon their fasting dayes, as well as vpon any other day to fill themselves at dinner with all kindes of meats (flesh onely excepted) and also at breakefast and supper to fill themselves with bread and drinke as much as they would : but the word of God teacheth vs (and this hath beene the practise of all the godly) that we abstaine breakfast and dinner, that wee might fast from euening to euening. And besides this generall libertie or licentiousnesse rather, which they gaue vnto all, some of the poorer sort, and seruants, and others also would fill their bellies of purpose on Thursday at night, and on Friday at dinner, that with lesse feeling to them-

themselves they might passe away their fast : whereas it is requisite in fasting, that we should feele the want in our bodie, that by it wee might bee brought to feele the wants of our soules. What an abuse was this, thus to peruert the right end of Gods ordinance into that that was cleane contrarie vnto it? which as we do iustly condemne in them, so we must take heed that we fall not into it our selues; for then we should be inexcusable before God our selues, as the Apostle sayth : Rom. 2. 1. for in that that we condemne another, wee condemne our owne selues, because we that condemne them, do the same things our selues.

Secondarily in their fasting daies they did greatly offend in delicacy & daintinesse of meats and drinkes : for whereas vpon that day, when we doe eat, wee should content our selues with ordinarie and common meate, sufficient onely to preferue health, because fasting is to humble vs : they did

*Another abuse in permitting all delicacie of meates and drinkes at the same time.*

at

at dinner permit the vse of all things  
sauing flesh, and so did giue liberty for  
greater dainties, and greater stirrers  
vp of the sinfull lustes of the flesh, then  
they did forbid and take away: and be-  
sides these, which were too much,  
wine of all sorts was not onely then  
permitted, but in great plentie vsed:  
and at euening when they did especi-  
ally professe to fast, they had all dain-  
ties except flesh & fish, as spice-bread,  
cakes, wafers, marmelade and sucket,  
with all kinde of fruites, as apples,  
peares, wardens, quinces and such like  
growing at home, and oringes, li-  
mons, figges, and all kates else, that  
could be had from beyond the seas.  
Was not this a plaine mocking, and a  
ridiculous, yea more then apish imita-  
tion of their fasting, that when they  
did most of all professe it for the hum-  
bling of their bodies, and therefore did  
abridge themselues of many things,  
they did eate and drinke very plenti-  
fully of all those things, which did  
most

most of all pamper it, and that without all scruple of conscience? So that with them it was a verie good fast kept, if at supper and dinner a man did eate no flesh, though he did eate al other dainties besides in what kinde soeuer: and with them it was a great fault to eate but one bitte of flesh, euen of colde meate, that was remaining before, then to fill themselues with al dainties of meat and drinke in any other kinde whatsoeuer: whereas we haue scene, that both the nature of the word Fasting, and also the practise of the best in holy Scripture doth require to eate nothing, but wholly to abstaine.

Besides this abstinence from meate and drinke, which is first and cheefe, and from whence the whole action is denominated, there ought to be some forbearing at that time of sleepe also, for the said end, euen for the humbling of the bodie; that we wanting something of that also, there might not onely be a proportion and an agreement

*In the day  
of fast we  
ought to  
abridge our  
selues of some  
part of our  
sleepe.*

Pro. 6.6.  
& 24. 23.

Joel 1. 13.

2. Sam. 12.  
16.

ment betweene meate and sleepe, but the body this way also might somewhat be cast downe, for want of naturall rest. So that though we should neuer play the sluggards, and delight in sleeping, which *Solomon* greatly condemneth in many places of the *Proverbs*: but take our rest as well as our meat moderately & soberly, yet at that time we should deny to our selues some part of our ordinary sleepe, in the evening or morning, or both, and also at noone: and now though this be a time of the yeere, wherein men vse to take there rest at noone, yet on the fasting day they should abstaine from it, both for the humbling of their bodies, and also that they might redeeme that time, bestowing it in some godly exercises. Thus the prophet *Joel* biddes the Priests lie all night in sackcloth, and so sheweth that they should continue their fast at least some part of the night: euen as it is said of *Dauid*, that when he fasted, he lay all night vpon the earth:

And



And also as *Queene Hester* willed the *Hest. 4. 16.*  
 Iewes to fast for her three daies and  
 three nights : So that we may plainly  
 see, that this exercise doth not onely  
 take vp the day, that we might abstain  
 from sleepe then, but also some part of  
 the night at the least. And thus we be-  
 gin ouer night to doe some thing, as to  
 thinke vpon Gods hand, and to praie,  
 and so againe betimes in the morning:  
 and if we doe not, or cannot come to  
 this perfection that other of Gods ser-  
 uants haue come vnto, in their great  
 humiliations; yet seeing they are writ-  
 ten for our instruction, let vs come as  
 neere them as we can: and seeing men  
 will breake their sleepe earely and late  
 for the world, let them doe it for the  
 seruice of God much more.

And the rather that we might be *what liberty*  
 willing to abridge our selues not one- *we haue of*  
 ly of sleepe, but of meat, let vs farther *meate and*  
 consider, that in this day of humiliati- *drinke and*  
 on, wherein this abstinence from these *sleepe in ca-*  
 things is required; all men and women *ses of necessi-*  
 are *ties.*

Math. 12. 1.

verf. 5.

are not so necessarily tied vnto them, but that if there be any who by reason of any defect, or infirmitie of bodie, or age yoong or old, are not able to performe it after this strict maner, that then euen by the lawe of God they haue libertie to vse so much in both these kindes, as may suffice for their health: For as Christ Iesus excuseth his disciples in the case of necessity for plucking the eares of corne and eating when they were hungrie and faint, that thereby they might be more fit to follow him, and attend vpon his seruice: and as *David* also is there excused for eating the Shew-bread, which by the generall rule was onely for the Priests: So we though by the general law of fasting, are forbidden at that time to abstaine from all meate and drinke, yet in cases of necessitie, when by reason of some thing in our bodies; so to do would hinder vs, and make vs more vnfit for the seruice of God, and to take a little doth further vs, and make

make vs more fit for it, if by eating or drinking some thing we are so indeed; then in so doing haue wee not onely not broke the fast, but therby attained vnto the principal end of it. And again as rest vpon the Sabbath is necessarily required; yet in times of necessitie labour is not onely permitted but also commanded; and thus *Helias* fleeing <sup>1. King.</sup> 40. daies together for the safegard of <sup>19.6.</sup> his life from the cruell persecution of *Isabell*, his trauell vpon those Sabbaths was no breach of the law: so is not eating a little of necessitie anie breach of fasting, though it seeme to be against the nature of it.

But heerein we must take heed that wee abuse not Gods liberalitie; and make it a cloake to our lustes, that vnder this colour and pretence of our infirmities, we eate and drinke, and feed our selues, when there is no need. For as it were a great fault to worke or trauell vpon the Sabbath day, when no necessitie did compell vs, because if

E

there

there be need, God hath not restrained vs; so in the day of fast to eate, when we haue no need, because when there is, God hath giuen vs libertie to doe it. Seeing the Lord dealeth so mercifully with vs all, that euen in the times, wherein he most restraineth vs, he giueth so great libertie to all that need, we must needs be so much the more vnthankfull vnto him for it, if we will not yeeld obedience to this ordinance of his, that is, that all they which for their yeeres, health, and strength are able to abstaine, shoulde vpon the fasting daies refuse all kinde of meat vntil the euening, and abridge themselues also of some part of their sleepe.

The third thing wherein this outward exercise doth consist is, that we abridge our selues also somewhat of our apparell; for in the vsing or refusing of that, as well as of any of the former, the bodie may be and is easier humbled or puffed vp. The King of  
Nineue

*fasting  
or appa-  
rell must  
be answered  
to that  
effect.*

Nineue in that fast of his did not onely Ion. 3. 5. 6.  
 command that man and beast should  
 put on sackcloth, but himselfe also a-  
 rose from his throne & place of estate,  
 and laid off his robe and princely ap-  
 parell from him, and couered himselfe  
 with sackcloth, and sate in ashes. And  
 the prophet *Isaiah* willing the people of Isaiah. 1. 13.  
 his time to fast and praie, and shewing  
 them the right maner of it, bids them  
 lie in sackcloth: and wee oftentimes  
 reade of sackcloth to haue beene vsed  
 in the times of publike and priuate fa-  
 sting: We then though we be nortied  
 to this kinde of weed, yet we must ob-  
 serue the equitie of it, which is to ab-  
 staine from that costly apparell and  
 trimming vp of our selues, which  
 might pufte vp the body with pride,  
 and put on that rather, so farre as it  
 standeth with decencie and comeli-  
 nesse, which might humble it: and so  
 then to weare our woorst clothes, ra-  
 ther then our best, or our second. For  
 as it is said of the Israelites, whē *Moses*.



od. 33 4.

brought them that ill tidings from the Lord, after their idolatrie with their golden calfe, that he would not goe with them, but send an angell before them. When the people heard this euill tidings, they sorrowed, and no man put on his best raiment: it was a time of sorrow, therefore they did not put on their best raiment: So all times of fasting being times of sorrow, all men and women then should haue off their best apparell, and be dissolute rather then ordinarily careful in dressing of themselves: for what curiositie can there be in putting on of a peece of sackecloth, which in fasting was the common attire of them all?

There ought  
to be a difference  
of our  
behaviour  
according to  
these times.

And truely all experience both of holy Scripture and otherwise doth sufficiently shewe, that godly wise men & women haue obserued a difference according to the time, as of other outward behauiour and things, so of their apparell: and thus as there hath bene a time of feasting, and a time of fasting,  
so

fo a time to come forth in their best  
& in their worst apparell. For it is no-  
ted of *Hester* that vertuous and noble Hest. 5. 1.  
Queene, that at the end of the fast she  
put on hir roiall apparell, that is, such  
as was meete for a Princes to be seene  
in, insinuating that during the time of  
the fast she wore other apparel, or this  
change on the sudden should not haue  
beene obserued and declared. And 2. Sam. 12.  
20.  
King *David* also, when the childe was  
dead, and so no longer cause of seeking  
to the Lord by fasting and praier, for  
the life of it. He arose from the earth,  
and washed and annointed himselfe,  
and changed his apparel, and came in-  
to the house of the Lord and worship-  
ped; that is, he clothed himselfe like a  
king, and did annoint and trimme vp  
himselfe to looke cheerefully, to shew  
that whiles he fasted he was dissolute  
and carelesse of himselfe, and abstai-  
ned from all ornaments and delights.  
So *Judith* that vertuous woman, when  
she went to *Holophernes* for the safe-

garde of her people, did put off her widdowes apparell, that is, her mourning weede, which during the time of her widdowhood she had worne before, which was a time of mourning, and then she did annoint herselfe, and put on all maner of ornaments, which though she had, yet she did not vse them before; so she had for the seuerall times of sorrow and ioy, futable kinds of dressing, and did vse them accordingly. Then in the day of fasting, wherein greatest sorrow should be, and be openly professed, wee should outwardly shew it in our apparell and dressing, as well as in other things; that both for costlinesse and curiositie it should differ frō other: which though they be but outward things, yet seeing they are practised of the godly, and tend to this end, we must follow their example. Therefore it were a great sinne vpon this day, to set out our selues in pride, either of apparell, or iewels, or sweete odors and perfumes,

as

ostlinesse  
f apparell  
nd curiositie  
a dressing a  
reat fault  
pon the  
use of fast.

as flowers in our hands or bosoms, farther then necessitie in time of infection requireth, or of starching, or curling and crisping of haire: and so to come abroad to see and to be seene, and (in the daies of greatest humiliati- on, to lift vp themselues highest, and to set out themselues as it were to sale in all maner of brauerie and delight: and then when they should cast down themselues lowest with the Publicane to receaue mercy, they should set vp the Peacocks feathers highest, as though they did not need it, or cared not for it. And this is to be noted the rather, because that some, if they come abroad and be seene, will not abate one haire of their pride, though they be very sluts and flouins at home, if it offend not your eares so to call them.

And these are the outward exercises of the bodie, which are common to al those that professe to keepe this holie ordinance, as they should, of what degree or calling soeuer they be: there is.

During the  
time of fast  
the married  
parties are  
abstaine  
from the  
marriage bed.

Cor. 7. 5.

one more remaining, which is proper to all that are married : who as they haue one comfort and commoditie in that estate, even of their bodies, aboue others, so they are during the time of fast to abstaine from it : for if we be debarred then of the vse of those things that are absolutely necessary for the preservation of our liues, then much more from those which are not of that necessitie, but rather for the comfort of our liues : and as all other pleasures, delights, and recreations, which are at other times lawfull, are to be withdrawen from the bodie, so this also. Therefore then the married parties with mutuall consent are to abstaine from the fellowship one of another, and from the marriage bedde, as the Apostle speaketh. Defraud not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that yee may giue your selues to fasting and praier, and againe come together, lest satan tempt you for your incontinencie : whereas at other times

he



he doth wholly forbid this abstinence, least satan should tempt them to sinne by refusing the remedie of it, so at this time he doth require it to this ende, that hee nameth. And this is so straitly required, that it is forbidden euen to them that are but newly married, as to the bridegroome and the bride, who in this haue the greatest liberty aboue all other : for the Prophet *Ioel* calling all sorts of men and women vnto fasting, because the punishment then vpon them was very great, speaketh euen to both these by name, and not onely willeth them also to fast, but to run out of their chamber, saying, Gather the people, sanctifie the *Ioel. 2. 16.* congregation, gather the Elders : assemble the children, and those that sucke the breasts, let the Bridegroome goe forth of his chamber, and the Bride out of her Bride-chamber. And thus much of the seuerall things, wherein the outward abstinence consisteth, which is the first part of this holy exercise,

ercise, now it remaineth that I should intreat of the inwarde vertues of the minde to be attained vnto by these meanes which are those that follow.

### HOMIL. III.

*The third Homilie intreateth of the inward vertues of the minde to be attained vnto, and professed in fasting; without the which the outward abstinence is nothing woorth: namely of true humilitie and casting downe of our selues before God, and whercin that consisteth, and how necessary it is, and by what meanes we may attaine vnto it.*

*The outward abstinence is to further vs in the inward graces of the spirit.*



**I**N the former Treatise we haue shewed, wherein the first part of fasting consisteth: which thogh it be first in order, yet is last in account, & that which in it self is referred to an other end, euen to the true humbling of vs before God for  
our

our sins, which if we do not attaine vnto by these meanes, it is not onely not accepted, but further prouoketh the wrath of God. For God is a spirit, and will be so worshiped, and though men iudge of vs after the outward appearance, yet God looketh to the heart: and when this outward abstinence hath beene vsed without these inward graces of humilitie and such like, the Prophets haue iustly found fault with them: and namely the Prophet *Esaie*. Wherefore haue we fasted (saie they) Esaie. 58.3. & thou seest it not? we haue punished our selues, and thou regardest it not: Behold in the day of your fast you will seeke your owne will, and require all your debtes. Behold yee fast to strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickednesse; yee shal not fast as yee doe to daie; is it such a fast that I haue chosen, that a man should afflict his soule for a day, and to bow downe his head as a bul-rush, and to lie downe in sackcloth and ashes: wilt thou cal this

without the  
which it is  
nothing  
worth.

a fasting; or acceptable day vnto the Lord? and so forth, as it followeth at large in that place: Where the hypocrites complaine that they had fasted, and had that way punished their bodies greatly, and God regarded it not; but he answereth, that if they were neuer so weake with fasting, euen like a bul-rush, that can not hold vp the head against the winde, yet because they were as cruell and hard-hearted to their brethren, as full of contention as before, and had not profited to the inward vertues of humilitie and contrition of heart, which was the principall end of it, therefore he did not accept of it: And indeed if we content our selues with this outward abstinence, the very brute beasts and cattell, euen the bullocks and sheepe at Nineue did keepe as good a fast as we, for they were couered with sackcloth, and did neither feed nor drinke water. Therefore we see what must make  
 • all our fasting acceptable vnto God,  
 euen

even that we be furthered by them in  
all such graces of his spirit in our soules  
and consciences, as the Lord in such  
cases requireth.

For as in the Sabbath bodily rest is  
first commanded, yet the sanctifying  
of the day of rest in the holy worship  
of God is chiefe, and that whereunto  
the other is referred, and without the  
which the other is nothing worth; els  
they that sleepe all day, or the cattell  
that are not wrought, might keepe as  
good a Sabbath as we. So in the day  
of fast, though abstinence from meat  
be first required, yet in it selfe such bo-  
dily exercise profiteth little, as the A-  
postle saith, but is vsed to another end.  
Therefore as if we wil keepe that fourth  
commandement, we must so rest, that  
hauing our minds & bodies drawn frō  
all worldly things, we might in both  
be wholly occupied in gods seruice:  
so if we will celebrate a fast vnto the  
Lord, we must so vse the outward cere-  
mony, as thereby we might be furthered

*As the rest  
of the Sab-  
bath is to be  
referred vnto  
the sanctification  
of the day.*



*The second  
part of fa-  
sting consi-  
steth in the  
inward  
grace of the  
minde.*

red in the inward vertues of the mind.  
We are then to consider what they  
be, for in them resteth the second part  
of fasting : for as it was sayd before,  
the whole action consisteth in two  
things, the one outward concerning  
the body, whereof we haue hitherto  
spoken; the other inward appertaining  
to the soule, which now remaineth to  
be intreated of. And that is all those  
inward vertues of the minde, and gra-  
ces of the spirit, which this way the  
Lord would haue vs furthered in : all  
which are so much the more excellent,  
and therefore the more diligently to  
be laboured after than the other, by  
how much the soule is better than the  
body, and how much it is better to ap-  
prooue our selues and our doings vnto  
the Lord, as we shall do in the one,  
then vnto men, as we may doe in the  
other.

*These are of  
two sorts.*

Heere then we are to consider, what  
these inward vertues be, whereto by  
this outward abstinence we should la-  
bour

bour to be furthered : which though they be many, yet for breuitie and memories sake, we will principally consider of two. The first is, the true humbling and casting downe of ourselues before the high Maiestie of God with sorrow and grieve of heart for all our sinnes in the conscience and feeling of them, and of the miserie due vnto vs for the same. The second is the assurance and good hope that we should haue, through the free mercy of God in his gracious promises, of the pardon and forgiuenesse of euery one of them for Christ Iesus his sake vpon our true repentance and vnfained turning from them : and so that we being thus reconciled vnto God, shall obtaine the things that we stand in need of, and by earnest prayer (alwayes ioyned vnto fasting) wee make sute vnto him for : whether it be the turning away or removing from vs some grieuous iudgement and punishment of his, or the bestowing or continuing of some great blessing.

Ezra 8. 21.

*As appea-  
reth in the  
fast of Ezra  
and his com-  
panie,*

blessing of his vpon vs, or vpon others. And these two, as they be chiefe and principall, so they are both of them mentioned in that fast that *Ezra* kept with the rest of his companie. And there at the riuer by Athana I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble our selues before our God, and seeke of him a right way for vs, and for our children, & for all our substance: for I was ashamed to require of the king an armie and horse-men to helpe vs against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken to the king saying, the hand of our God is vpon al them that seeke him in goodnesse, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him: So we fasted & besought our God for this: and he was intreated of vs. Where we see how he in his returne from Babylon to Ierusalem after the captiuitie with many other, at such a place proclaimed a fast to these ends, both that they might humble themselves before God for their sinnes, which

which were the cause of their captiuitie, and might now hinder them from such blessings as they stood in need of: and that they might by praier seeke earnestly vnto God with hope, that he would direct and blesse them in the waie, and defend them from their enemies : So in their obedience they did aime at these two inward vertues; first to bee thoroughly humbled for their sinnes, and then by earnest praier to seeke to God with hope, that hee would giue them the thing, that then they stood in need of, euen defence from their enemies in the way, and a prosperous iourney to Ierusalem. And so in this practise of theirs as in a glasse we most cleerely see, whereunto this fast of ours must be referred, I meane the outward abstinence, and what we must specially labour after in it, namely that wee may be humbled before God for all our sinnes, which haue so greatly prouoked the wrath of God, that it may easily be seene of all ; and

F

that

that we seeke to him by feruent praier for the turning away of his heauie hand that hath a long time beene most greeuously vpon many parts of this lande : if we seeke not after these and by this abstinence finde our selues furthered in them, our fasting is nothing woorth, because wee come not vnto the chiefe part of it, nor vnto the marrow and substance of it, but content our selues with the shell, and as it were the bare shadow so it. For as it is said in the common prouerbe, and as it is true in all other things, as good neuer a whit, as neuer the better, so in this in like maner.

The first  
vertue is  
true humili-  
ty, and what  
that is.

To speake therefore in order first of the humbling and casting downe of our selues : this humilitie of minde is a vile esteeming, and base iudgeing, or thinking of our selues before God and men in respect of our innumerable great sinnes, wherewith we haue defiled our selues, and offended God, and prouoked his heauy wrath and displeasure



sure against vs : whereby it commeth  
to passe, that wee are displeased with  
our selues, and offended and grieued  
at our selues, yea are (as it were) at vt-  
ter defiance with our selues, because  
of our sinnes, and the curse of God,  
and all miserie due to vs for the same.

And this humilitie is contrarie to that  
pride and haughtinesse of minde, which  
is in many, whereby they thinke too  
highly of themselves, and are puffed vp,  
and full of selfe loue, iudging better  
of themselves then there is cause : be-  
ing also thereby ready to iustify them-  
selves before God, and men, like vnto  
that proud Pharisee, that Christ spea-  
keth of in the Gospell, who thus vaun-  
teth of himselfe before God through  
hypocrisie, and want of due examina-  
tion of himselfe, and also despised the  
Publicane who prayed by him: saying,  
I thanke thee O God, that I am not  
as other men, extortioner, vnjust, ad-  
ulterer, or euen as this Publicane?  
whereas the other standing a farre off,

*Contrary to  
pride.*

Luk. 18. 11.

giueth many tokens of their humility, for he would not lift vp so much as his eies to heauen; but smot his breast, and saide, O God be mercifull to me a sinner. And this casting downe of our selues in our owne iudgement, as it is required, so it is very fit and answerable to the outward exercise of fasting: for therefore doe we abstaine from the outward comfort and maintenance of this life for a time, that wee might haue a quicker feeling of our vnwoorthinesse, namely that for our sinnes we are vnworthy of all of them, and of any comfort by them, yea of life it selfe: and thus we bring downe the bodie, that the minde might bee brought downe, and we afflict the bodie, that the deserued death of soule and body might be the better knowen and felt of vs. We therefore abstaine from all pleasures and delights thereof lawful in themselves, that thorough conscience of our sinnes, and the deserued wrath of God for them not onely

*This humbling of our soules is, and must be answerable to the afflicting of our bodies.*

onely present, but that that may come heereafter we might be drawn to a greater sorrow : which inward affliction and griefe of the soule if it be seuered from the other, it is as a dead carcasse without a soule, yea a shadow without a bodie, that is, it is nothing woorth.

For this sorowing and mourning is so vnseparablie proper vnto the time of fasting, and so fitly answereth to the outward ceremonie of it, that the thing it selfe is thus noted out by Christ himselfe. Can the children of Math. 9. 16 the mariage chamber mourne, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the daies will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. Where Christ defending his disciples, that they did not then fast, speakes of fasting as of a time of mourning : for in the one place hee saith Fast, and in the other Mourne, to shew what we must come vnto in the day of fast, euen to mourne. And this

*Therefore  
vnto fasting  
is alwaies  
ioined mourning.*

*Luk. 5.  
34. 35.*

hath also beene the practise of the seruants of God, that in the daies of fasting they haue thus cast downe themselves, and haue not onely inwardly sorowed, but haue outwardly testified the same by weeping, as indeed great sorow many times causeth teares. For so is it said of *Dauid*, when tidings was brought him of the death of *Saul*, that he sorowed, and wept, and fasted. both himselfe and his company. Then *Dauid* tooke holde on his clothes, and rent them, and likewise al the men that were with him: and they mourned and wept, and fasted, vntill euen for *Saule* and for *Jonathan* his sonne, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were slaine with the sword. Heere there fasting was ioined with mourning and weeping. So likewise did all the people of Israel, when they were twise ouerthrowne by the Beniamites, they sorowed and wept, and fasted vnto the euening; as it is said in the booke of the *Judges*.  
Then

1. Sam. I. 12

Judg. 10.

Then all the children of Israell went vp, and all the people also came vp vnto the house of God, and wept, and sate there before the Lord, and fasted that day vnto the euening, & offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And againe in the daies of *Samuel*, when they were oppressed by the Philistims, he exhorteth them to confesse their sinnes to God, and leaue them, and seeke vnto God, that they might find mercy with him; and they then fasted and praied, and wept so abundantly, that it is saide, they drew out whole buckets of water out of their eies. For *Samuel* said, Gather all Israel together to *Mizpah*, and I will pray for you vnto the Lord: and they gathered together to *Mizpah*, and drew water and powred it out before the Lord, and fasted the same day, & said there, We haue sinned against the Lord. Thus in this fast of theirs also they confessed their sinnes, and sorowed woonderfully, as appeared

1. Sam. 7



iel 2. 17.

verf. 13.

these fafts  
 are wee  
 it labour  
 thus true  
 iustice  
 contriti-  
 f mnde.

by the plenty of teares. And to bee short, this is that, which the Prophet *Joel* speaketh of, and exhorteth them vnto, as a thing necessarie: Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lorde weepe betweene the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people O Lord: whē as he had said in the verses going before, Thus saith the Lord, Turne you vnto me with all your hart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your hearts, and not your clothes. So that he not only speaketh of fasting, as that wherunto the Lord did then cal them, but of sorrowing & mourning, which in it he required of them. And by all these we may easily vnderstand how greatly in these fastings of ours we also should deiect our selues in our own cies, & what sorow and grieve of mind should be in vs, because of our sinnes, and of the wrath of God so manifestly appearing against them. And truely if euery man and woman would enter  
 into

into a serious consideration of their liues past, and examine themselues, their deeds, words, and thoughts in al the commandements of God, wee might be more humbled then we are: especially if we did wisely consider also the punishments due to vs for them, and those not onely threatned, but alreadie in great measure vpon vs, by this great mortalitie in manie places, which still increaseth. Therefore let euerie one pray to God, that he would worke this in him, that hee may haue a soft and tender heart, a broken and contrite spirit, which is an acceptable sacrifice vnto him, and which he will not despise (as the Prophet saith) PSAL. 51. 17. that is, will most fauourable accept: that I saie, hee may be wounded and prickt at his heart for his sinne: and let vs all pray that this abstinence and fasting might be blessed to euerie one of vs to these endes: so shall it be acceptable vnto God, and profitable to our selues.

Furthermore

And this  
must be pro-  
fessed by our  
deeds, and  
confessed in  
our words.

1. Cor. II.

24.

vers. 26.

Furthermore as this abstinence is  
vsed to this ende, euen to bring vs to  
this sorow for our sinnes, which wee  
haue spoken of: so also that we might  
professe to the glorie of God, that we  
doe thus iudge of our selues indeed.  
For as the Sacrament of the Lordes  
Supper is appointed not onely that we  
might remember the death of Christ  
by it, according as it is written, This  
doe yee in remembrance of me, but  
that we might shew it foorth vntill his  
comming againe, as it is saide in the  
same place, As often as yee shall eate  
this bread, and drinke this cuppe, yee  
shew the Lords death till he come: e-  
uen that wee looke to be saued by it  
onely, to the condemning of all those  
that put their trust in any thing else:  
So this abstinence is vsed not onely to  
bring vs to this vile esteeming of our  
selues for our sinnes, but that in the  
feeling of it, we might by our practise  
and in our praiers make open professi-  
on of the same: euen as *Benhadad*  
king

king of *Aram*, sent his seruants girded with sackcloth about their loines, and with ropes about their heads, to *Abab* king of *Israell*, to intreat for his life, saying, Thy seruant *Benhadad* saith, I praie thee let me liue, that he might see, that he iudged himselfe woorthie of death. So the children of God in times past by abstaining from meate and drinke, did confesse with their mouthes, and by this practise did openly shew it, that they thus iudged of themselues, euen that they were vnwoorthy of a crumme of bread, or of a droppe of water, or of any sustenance whatsoeuer: and by putting on sackcloth they professed that they were vnwoorthy of any raiment euen of the least ragge, and therefore also but for shame they would haue gone naked: and by watching, that they were vnwoorthy of sleepe or any rest: and so of other things, as that they were vnwoorthy of the benefite of mariage, and of any comfort in it, and  
of

of any pleasure or delight in any creature or ordinance of God, but that it should be iust with God, if hee did cause them to spend awaie their daies in heauinesse. And when they put dust and ashes vpon their heads, that they were vnwoorthie to breath vpon the face of the earth, or to tread vpon the ground, yea so vnwoorthy of life, that if they had their deserts, they should be as deepe vnder the ground, as they were aboue it. And if there had beene any thing else in the world that would haue represented and set foorth the euerlasting paines of hell, & eternall condemnation, that would they haue borne the image of in their bodies, to testify openly against themselves, that they iudged themselves woorthy of that also. And so they haue in thus doing iustified the Lord in that vengeance of his, that hath beene either threatned, or alreadie vpon them: so farre haue they bene from murmuring or charging the Lord with anie hard

that we  
say iustified  
od and  
ndemne  
r selves.



hard dealing against them. As the prophet *Daniell* in the time of the captiuitie when in the end of the 70. yeeres foretold by *Jeremy* hee praied for deliuerance, and (as it is saide in the text) turned his face vnto the Lord, and sought by praier and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes, and made confession of his sinnes, and of the sinnes of all the people, in his praier hee breaketh out into these words: O Lord righteousnesse belongeth vnto thee, & vnto vs open shame, as appeareth this day vnto euerie man of *Iudah*, and to the inhabitants of *Ierusalem*, yea vnto all *Israel*, both neere and farre off, through al the countries, whether thou hast driuen them, because of their offences, that they haue committed against thee. O Lord vnto vs appertaineth open shame, to our Kings, to our Princes, and to our fathers, because we haue sinned against thee. Thus by his fasting from meate, and putting ashes vpon his head, hee  
professed

Dan. 9. 3.

vers. 7. 8.

professed that himselfe and al the people were not onely vnwoorthy of any deliuerance (which he sued for) but euen of life: yea that they were altogether most worthy both of this captiuitie and of the shame and reproch of it, and also of vtter destruction and death it selfe because of their sinnes, which they had committed against the maiestie of God. *Ezra* also in the like practise maketh the same confession. O my God I am confounded, and ashamed to lift vp mine eies vnto thee my God, for our iniquities are increased ouer our head, and our trespasses are growen vp vnto the heauen.

*Ezra 9.6.*

If we will  
scape any  
fruite by our  
fasting, we  
must labour  
to be hum-  
bled thereby.

We see then that if we will keepe a fast acceptable vnto the Lord, we must be humbled in our selues euery one before him for our sins, and this outward profession that we make in abstaining from all things it must be in truth, and our mindes must be answerable to our deeds: for if we abstaine from the creatures of God, and do not iudge

iudge our selues vnwoorthie of them,  
if we forbear the comfort of this life,  
and doe not iudge our selues vnwoor-  
thie of them also, and of life it selfe, all  
is but hypocrisie, and God careth not  
for this outward shew. Therefore let Luk. 18. 13.  
euery man labour to come to this, that  
he may be humbled in himselfe, as the  
poore Publicane was, when he stoode  
aloofe off, and durst not lift vp his eies  
vnto heauen, but knocked on his brest,  
and saide, Lord be mercifull vnto me cap. 15. 21.  
a sinner: and let him be vile in his own  
eies, as the prodigall sonne was, when  
he came to his father, and said, Father  
I haue sinned against heauen, and be-  
fore thee, and am no more woorthie  
to be called thy sonne. So let vs iudge  
and say of our selues from the bottome  
of our harts, that we are vnwoorthie  
of all his benefites, publike and pri-  
uate: and most woorthie of all his pu-  
nishments, euen of this plague that  
is among vs, and that it should still  
continue and increase: and so let vs  
iudge

1. Cor. 11.

31.

Ezek. 18.

23. 31.

*The holy exercise* 110 M. 3.  
iudge our selues, that he may not iudge  
vs, or that in his good time he may  
cease iudgeing of vs, as he hath promi-  
sed. For euen as the father looketh that  
the childe should humble himselfe to  
the confession of his fault before him,  
when he hath taken the rod of corre-  
ction into his hand, and then he is rea-  
dy to spare him, and not before: so the  
Lord looketh for this at the handes of  
men much more: and if we could haue  
done this thorowly long before, wee  
might haue escaped happely this pre-  
sent iudgement: so if we can but euen  
now doe it, we may come out of it in  
time, or haue it turned into some blef-  
sing: and vntill then he will not cease,  
or if he do, he reserueth vs but to some  
further iudgement. If then we would  
haue any good by this fasting, we must  
humble our selues, and the more wee  
can do it, to sorrow for our sinnes, the  
more mercie may wee looke for from  
God. For he desireth not the death of  
a sinner, but rather that he should re-  
pent

pent and liue, as he hath witnessed by his holy Prophet: and the people of *Nineue*, when they turned euery man from his euill way, and from the wickednesse that was in his handes, and thus humbled themselues, then God repented, and turned from his fierce wrath, that they perished not, as *Jona* had conditionally threatened before. But this point is more largely to be considered of heereafter, when I shall by the grace of God speake of the manifold fruits of fasting: in the meane season, now we onely see what measure of humilitie then God requireth of vs.

But if any should not only not humble himselfe, and be sory for his sinne, but vpon confidence of his fasting wax bolder to sinne, and in a false persuasion that through obedience giuen vnto God in this one point, he may be the bolder to be disobedient in another: as too many thinke, that because they haue done some good seruice vnto

But if we grow proud by them, then are they vnprofitable and hurtfull vnto vs.

G

God



God to day, they may at other times  
 take scope and libertie to themselves in  
 sinne, and so set one against another:  
 or if heereupon they grow proud, and  
 thinke well of themselves, because  
 they do so and so, as some are readie to  
 boast and say, Oh we haue beene at a  
 fast to day, but you haue not, and so de-  
 spise other that doe not, and iustifie  
 themselves in comparison of them,  
 like vnto those proud Pharisees, that  
 saide vnto our Sauour Christ, Why  
 doe the Disciples of *Iohn* fast often and  
 praie, and the Disciples of the Phari-  
 ses also, but thine eate and drinke? then  
 this holy ordinance of God is shame-  
 fully abused, and peruered from the  
 right end of it; and so that that should  
 be a soueraigne medicine to cure our  
 soules, by this horrible abuse is turned  
 into ranke poison to kill vs. For that  
 that should make vs so to sorrow for  
 our sinnes, that we should vnfaignedly  
 purpose to leaue the, maketh vs more  
 presumptuous and bould to sinne: and  
 that

that that should humble vs before men in respect of our vilenesse, doth make vs to swell, and puffe vs vp in respect of our holinesse and worthinesse: therefore we must take heed, that we fal not into these grosse sinnes.

By this also it appeareth how farre the Papists Church is from the true maner of fasting: for they doe greatly boast of their fastings, as the proud Pharises did before: and they make them meritorious for the pardoning of their sinnes: for this is part of the penance that is iniointed them to make satisfaction: euē to fast so many times, vpon such & such daies, and after such a maner, more or lesse, strictly according to the prescript of their ghostly father. Which fasts of theirs how well they haue kept, we haue seene before, but now we say, that they make them equall with the bloud of Christ, which is onely able to clense vs from all our sinnes. When they then ascribe remission of sins to their fastings, & thinke

*As all popish fasts are, because they are puffed vp in the merit of chr.*

that partly they deserue it thereby: and that God is bounde as it were vnto them for it: this wickednesse not onely bereaueth them of all fruit of it, but maketh them guiltie of horrible blasphemie: and so all their fasts as they were ridiculous and foolish, placing them in those things, wherein they did not consist, so were they most vngodly, when they made them able to merite remission of sinnes: whereby it came to passe, that thereby they were not onely not humbled, but contrarie to the nature of it, exceedingly pufft vp by them. We then if we will haue anie blessing frō God by these means, must not onely abstaine from this blasphemous pride, to thinke the better of our selues, because we doe thus, as that euen by this we must labour to come to a greater measure of humilitie, for our sinnes, then we had before, or otherwise could come vnto.

Seeing then this humiliation is a speciall vertue and grace of God to be attained

attained vnto in the day of fast, it is necessarie to be considered, what is to be done for the effecting of it : that is, how and by what meanes wee may humble and cast downe our selues.

*The meditation of our finnes, and the punishment of the same is a meanes truly to humble vs*

And that is done by the consideration of the greatnesse of our finnes, and the grievous punishment due to vs for them : for the more that we know and meditate vpon these, the more by the blessing of God shall we be humbled: and the lesse wee know or thinke of them, the further shall we be from this true humilitie. For this one thing, euen to consider seriously, how manie waies wee haue offended God, and how great wrath and condemnation is belonging to vs for it, will breake our harde and stonie hearts, if anie thing in the world will doe it : and nothing will doe it but this, and so farre foorth as it bringeth vs vnto this. For let a man haue neuer so great a crosse besides, as be he poore, or sicke, or in disgrace, or haue some worldly losse,

om. 7.24.

yet he may hope to recouer that estate, or may thinke that he hath some other thing in him to recompence anie or al of these losses, and so his heart is not yet humbled: But when he seeth how many waies he standeth guiltie before God, and what a great account hee hath to giue vnto him, that hee seeth his sinnes to be more in number, then the heires of his head, or the sandes of the sea: and then how many punishments and plagues in this world, and in the world to come are dew to him in soule and body for euer and euer according to the manifold curses of the law of God, and his immutable iustice contained in them: this shall bee able to make him cast away all his pride & conceit in himselfe, or in any thing else, and to thinke of himselfe (as he is indeed in himselfe) to bee a most vile creature, and so to crie out of himselfe, as the Apostle doth, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the bodie of this death?

Now



Now the holie spirit of God work- *we are*  
 eth this in vs by the true vnderstan- *brought to*  
 ding and right vse of the lawe of God *the sights of*  
 set downe in the tenne Commande- *our finnes*  
 ments: and also of the blessings pro- *by the true*  
 mised to those that keepe the law: and *vnderstan-*  
 the curses denounced against them *dine and*  
 that breake it, which are to this end an- *right vse of*  
 nexed to the same law, According to *the law,*  
 which lawe, if men not partiallie ex-  
 amine themselues, they shall see, both  
 how many duties they haue left vn-  
 done, and also how manie finnes they  
 haue committed against God & men.  
 For that is as a cleere glasse, to let vs  
 see the least spot or blemish in our  
 face, that is the least sinne committed  
 in our life: and as a light vnto our  
 pathes, and a lanterne to our feete, to  
 let vs see how one thing differeth from  
 another, good from euill; euen as the  
 difference of colours is easily discerned  
 when a light commeth in, which was  
 not before: and to be short, it is a rule  
 to shew, what is crooked and what is

Psal. 119.  
105.

straight, that is, what is agreeable vnto, or what differeth from the will of God, which is the perfect rule of all righteousness.

And we are  
rather hum-  
bled by consi-  
dering the  
promises and  
curses an-  
nexed to the  
law.

Then if wee come to the promises of the law, we shall see howe manie good things, which God of his meere mercy had promised, and others haue inioied, we haue lost through our own default, both for soule and bodie, for our selues and ours; for this life also, and for the life to come; and so in what an unhappie estate we are in in our selues: And though this be verie much to humble a man to thinke, thus much good haue I wilfully lost, yet if we further cōsider the curses not onely dispersed in the whole Scripture, but specially set down at large, *Deut. 28.* for sin, to to be brought vpon vs in soule and bodie and otherwise, as incurable sicknesses & diseases, terror & feare of minde, scarcitie and famine, the sword and such like in this worlde, besides eternall destruction of soule and bodie in

in hell fire after this life; these will let vs see our miserie much more, that so we might feele & acknowledge what vile & wretched creatures we be, men and women, that haue iustly brought vpon our selues so great calamity. We are then for the better humbling of our selues before God, as at other times, so especiallie in the day of fasting to giue our selues to the serious and earnest meditation of these things, namely, of the law of God, and that in euery commandement, and applie it to our conscience: and the appurtenances also of the same law, that is, the promises made to the obedient, and the punishments threatned to the disobedient; and pray to God for his good spirit, that it might worke vpon vs, euen vpon our hearts, that by this meanes wee might come to that measure of humilitie, that is meet for vs so great sinners to come vnto, and that he would cast vs downe vnder his holie hande, euen so low, as his owne children

children should be: for want of which our hearts are hardened, though our estate be so desperate and forlorne, as at all other times, so euen in the day of fasting, wherein greatest humiliation is required.

And besides all this, to further vs in this most excellent vertue of humiliation, which in time will lift vs vp as high, as wee were cast downe before, according to the Prouerbe of *Solomon*, Before glory goeth humilitie, we must also consider, the execution of these iudgements vpon men from time to time, that we might know God to be iust, and will assuredly doe as he hath faide, and that he hath not threatned in vaine, as many men doe imagine: that so wee might feare and tremble, when wee shall see as it were others beaten for the like sinnes before our faces. And these iudgements wee must well weigh both generally brought vpon whole nations and countries, as how hee spared not the olde world, when

Pro. 15, 32.  
*Especiallye  
how the  
Lord from  
time to time  
hath verified  
the same.*

Gen. 6.

when all flesh had corrupted their waies, but brought an vniuersall deluge vpon it: and how hee ouerthrew *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the rest of the cities for their filthinesse, yea how he spared not the ten tribes of *Israel*, nor *Judah* it selfe, but caried them both captiues out of their owne country, for their idolatrie & other sinnes: And also his iudgements particularly broght vpon priuate men, as how *Esau* was cast off from Gods people for his profanessse, & how *Ismael* was put out of his fathers house, and so out of the Church of God for his scorning and mocking, wherewith hee persecuted his brother: and how *Absolon* was hanged between heauen and earth by the haire of his head, for rebelling against his father; how *Haman* was hanged vp vpon an high gibbet for his pride against men: and king *Herod* eaten vp with vermine for his intollerable pride against God and men: how *Ahab* and *Iesabell* were slaine for their oppression

Gen. 19.

2. King. 17.

2. King. 24.

& 25.

Lam. 1. 3.

Genes. 25.

33. & 27. 38

Heb. 12. 16.

17.

Gen. 21. 10.

Gal. 4. 29.

2. Sam. 18.

9.

Hest. 7. 8. 9.

1. King. 22.

38.

2. King. 9.

35.



2. Sam. 12.  
10. 11.

1. Cor. 10.  
8.

And not  
onely vpon  
the wicked,  
but vpon his  
owne chil-  
dren.

Mat. 23. 43.

oppression of *Naboth*, so that the dogs  
did licke the bloud of the one, and deu-  
our the carcase of the other: yea how  
*David* was grieuouſly puniſhed for his  
adulterie and wrong done to *Vriah*;  
and 23000. in one day deſtroied for  
their filthie fornication; and to con-  
clude how the Lord from time to time  
in all ages and places hath not ſpared  
men in their finnes; that ſo we might  
not onely ſee in them what wee haue  
deſerued, but how he is readie to pu-  
niſh alſo, for there is no reſpect of per-  
ſons with him. And in all theſe wee  
muſt aduiſedly conſider, howe God  
hath not onely puniſhed the wicked  
for their finnes, but that hee hath not  
ſpared his owne children: as that hee  
not onely vtterly deſtroied thoſe ſea-  
uen goodly churches in *Aſia*, becauſe  
they fell from their firſt loue, and did  
not repent in time: but alſo did euen  
caſt off the *Iewes* his owne people for  
their contempt of his word, and tooke  
away the Goſpell of the kingdome  
from

from them vnto this day, because they  
 did not bring forth the fruites of it:  
 that(as the Apostle saith) We by their  
 fall might feare, and seeing hee spared  
 not the naturall branches, we shoulde  
 take heed least hee also spare not vs.  
 But most of all we may see the fierce  
 wrath of God against sinne to humble  
 vs, and his vchangeable iustice in the  
 person of his owne deare Sonne, who  
 taking vpon him our sinnes, was in all  
 torments of soule and bodie pressed  
 downe with them to the bottome of  
 hell for a time, no praiers or supplica-  
 tions that hee could make euen with  
 strong cries could deliuer him, no a-  
 gonie or bloudie sweats, that hee in-  
 dured in his soule and bodie, could pa-  
 cific it, and set him free, but he must  
 needs beare it vnto the full; and so in-  
 ded (as the Prophet foretolde) he was  
 wounded for our transgressions, he was  
 broken for our iniquities, and the cha-  
 stisement of our peace was vpon him:  
 that so we by the law seeing our sinnes,  
 and

Rom. II.  
 20. 21.

*Euen vpon  
 his owne  
 sonne Iesus  
 Christ our  
 Saniour.*

Heb. 5. 7.  
 Luk. 22. 44.

Esa. 53. 8.

and by his curses acknowledging our desert for the same, and by the execution of them his constant and immutable iustice in them might in feare and trembling cast downe our selues at his feet: and as in fasting we haue bereaued our selues willingly of all, so we might feele, and in feeling confesse that we are vnwoorthie of all, and so come to this most excellent vertue of humilitie, which is the first part of those inward graces; which by the outward exercise of fasting is to be laboured after, and openly professed. And so much of that: now remaineth the other to be spoken of.

## HOMILIE IIII.

*The fourth Homilie continueth to intreat of the inward vertues of the mind; and namely of the hope that we should haue of the pardon of our sinnes, vpon our true repentance: and that God will giue vs the things that we seeke to him for: which hope must stirre vs vp to seruent  
and*

and long prayer, and how by importuni-  
tie wee shall preuaile with God; and  
what things els may quicken vs vnto  
seruents prayer.



He second part of the  
inward vertues of the  
mind, and graces of the  
spirit of God, which we  
must not only haue, but

*The second  
inward ver-  
tue is, the  
hope, that  
by faith  
we should  
haue of the  
faueur of  
God vpon  
our true hu-  
militie.*

labour to be furthered in by this out-  
ward exercise of fasting, and to which  
end we do vndertake it, and which al-  
so we must openly professe, is an assu-  
rance & full hope, that God for Christ  
his sake vpon our true repentance for  
our sinnes, and vnfained humiliation  
for them, and forsaking of them, will  
pardon them all, and will giue vs all  
those things that we stand in need of,  
and wee then make humble sute vnto  
him for. So then this is also another  
thing, that as at all other times, so most  
of all in the day of fast we must labour  
after, euen an increase of faith, where-  
by

by wee may be raised vp in our soules through the grace of God in Christ, as high as the conscience of our finnes, and the deserued punishment of them doth cast vs downe : and a full perswasion that we shall obtaine the remoouing of those euils (through the death & merits of our Sauior Christ) which either presently presse vs, or iustly hang ouer our heads. For as true repentance humbling vs, and as it were casting vs downe with one hand, both in sorow for our finnes, and confession of the same, leaueth vs not in that downefall, lest we should dispaire, but graciously reacheth the other hand to lift vs vp againe : and this is the right end of all true humilitie, not to dismay vs, but to comfort vs with the hope of Gods fauour, euen from thence, as it is sayd.

**1. Pet. 5. 5.** Humble your selues vnder the mightie hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. And againe, he resisteth the proud, but giueth grace to the humble. So this solemne profession of humilitie



militie in fasting and praier, much more doth, and must so cast vs downe, and abase vs in the conscience of our vnwoorthinesse euen of the least of Gods benefits, openly in our practise by bereauing our selues of them for a time professing so much, as that it doth giue vs so much the more hope of fauour from God, by how much we doe then more then ordinarily iudge our selues.

So that heere is another thing to be furthered in by this outwarde abstinence, namely, that wee may haue a greater hope and assurance then before, that God for Christs sake will be mercifull vnto vs, because we doe according to his commandement more humble our selues then before: not for the merite or woorthinesse of that, but because of the gracious promises, which of his free mercie he hath made to all those that thus turne vnto him, and vnfaignedly seeke him. For as the abstinence without this humiliation is

*In which we must be furthered, by the inward and outward affliction of the body and the minde.*

nothing worth, so is the casting down of our selues in the sight and feeling of our sins, & our vnworthinesse for the same of no value or profite without this hope in the goodnesse of God; and therefore as this abstinence must bring vs to this contrition of heart, so that must further vs in our hope. And therefore vnto this abstinence there hath beene alwaies adioined, as a thing inseparable, supplications & praiers, which cannot be at all in any acceptable maner without some hope and assurance from God, that we shall bee heard. As then in all maner of fastes we must first cleerely see our sins, confesse them vnfaignedly, and thoroughly iudge our selues for them; so must we then also with good hope in the goodnesse of God for Christes sake praie earnestly for the full pardon and forgiuenesse of them, and for the turning away, or remoouing from vs all heauie iudgements, which are due to vs, or vpon vs for the same. So that this

*And therefore fasting  
is neuer  
without  
prayer.*

is an other thing required of vs in the day of fasting, which we now keepe, and to which end we doe abstaine as we do, euen that with great hope vpon our great humiliation we might praie to God, to remooue from our brethren this heavy hand of his, that hath a long time lien sore vpon vs, and vpon them.

And thus we shall find in holy scripture, that all the best seruants of God haue in their fastings vsed solemne praier: and whereas praier is, & ought to be a daily exercise of euery christian man & woman, euen as the Iewes had their daily morning and euening sacrifice, which were not without praier; and as it is saide of *Daniell*, that it was Dan. 6. 10. his custome to praie three times euery day; in the daies of fasting they haue vsed a speciall and extraordinarie kinde of praier, differing from all other, that they haue vsed before, both in zeale and strength of praier, and also in continuance. Therefore we in

*Yea earnest  
and seruent,  
and continu-  
all prayers*

the daies of our fastings also should be more zealous & feruent in praier, and also longer, and more continuall then at other times, as then we haue alwaies some speciall cause to mooue vs vnto it, and the outward abstinence also should further vs thereunto. And this we read to haue beene the praetise of the *Niniuites* in their publike fast, which they kept, that then according to that knowledge that they had, they did all praie verie earnestly vnto God, that he would spare them: according to that that the king commanded, saying, Let man and beast put on sackcloth, and crie mightily vnto God, that is, praie earnestly vnto him for mercie: as *Dauid* vseth the like phrase in the same sense. Out of the deepe places haue I called or cried out vnto thee, O Lord. And this feruencie of praier the prophet *Esay* required of the Iewes in their fastes, when hee saith, Behold yee fast to strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickednesse,

*Iona* 3. 8.

*Psal.* 130. 1.

*Esay.* 58. 4.

nesse, yee shall not fast as yee doe to daie, to make your voice to be heard aboue: this latter part of the verse others doe read thus, (whose interpretation and iudgement heere I follow) You doe not fast, that you might lift vp your voice on high, that is, to God in feruent praier, which is one speciall cause of fasting; and therefore it is called a day of reconciliation, because that then the priest by earnest praier did seeke to reconcile the people vnto God. But to returne to the prophet *Esay*: he finding fault with them, that they did not fast to a right end, namely, to humble themselves, and conuicting them plainly of the want of humilitie and repentance, because there was strife, and debate, and contention among them, which ought not to haue beene, neither could haue beene, if in the sight of their sinnes they had beene rightly humbled to seeke vnto God for mercy: saith farther, that they did not fast (as those times did require).

Leu. 23. 27



to lift vp their voices earnestlie to God in praier; they did chide, and were earnest and aloud one with another, but they were not earnest and aloud in praier vnto God as they should haue beene: therefore whereas it is translated, Yee shall not fast as you do to daie, to make your voice to be heard aboue; referring this lifting vp of the voice vnto loud words in contention, (as for the most part men will then be heard) others doe read it (as wee haue heard) you doe not, or you will not fast, that your voice might be heard aboue, referring it to the lifting vp of the voice to God in praier, and in more then ordinarie praier, noted by the lifting vp of their voice: as was said before, that the *Ninivites* did not speake onely, but crie out, and that mightily, or with all their strength vnto God. So that to fasting must be ioined a most earnest kinde of praier, as the time shall then require: and as men must not praie coldly and from

Therefore in  
the daies of  
fasting we  
must inforce  
our selues to  
earnest and

the

the teeth outward (as we say) at anie time, so then especially they must not bee wearie, but consider well what great necessitie there is of praier, both in respect of their sinnes, and of the punishment of them; and so inforce themselves to an earnest kinde of long praier: as if a man were fallen into a deepe pit or well, he would crie out aloud and long with all his strength, euen vntill he were hoarse, or had lost his voice, that so he might be heard, and holpen, and would not fauour himselfe in such a case.

Thus it appeareth that when *Ezra*, and the rest that feared God with him, fasted because of the transgression of them of the captiuitie, that hee praied verie earnestly and long, as wee may gather both from his behauour, and from the wordes that hee then vsed, which were full of great affection: for it is written of him, that he sate downe

*Ezra. 9. 4.*

astonied vntill the euening sacrifice, and after the euening sacrifice he arose.

vp from his heauinesse, and when he had rent his clothes, & his garments, he fell vpon his knees, and spread out his handes vnto the Lord God: and saide, O my God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift vp mine eies vnto thee my God, for our iniquities are increased ouer our head, and our trespasse is growen vp vnto the heauen, and so forth as it followeth in that praier of his, full of all humilitie and zeale. The like may be said of the prophet *Daniel*, who in the end of the seauentie yeeres of their captiuitie (vnderstanding by bookes (as he saith of himselfe) and namely by reading the Prophecie of *Ieremie*, that the number of yeeres which the Lord would accomplish for the destruction of *Ierusalem* were now almost expired) and turned his face vnto the Lord, by praier and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth & ashes: and then how zealously & feruently he praied, as it appeereth in the whole praier, in which he

he often breaks out into many passionate exclamations: so especially by the often doubling of the same petitions, which was no vaine babling in him, full of words without any great matter, but did arise of the abundance of his earnest desire and great feeling that he had of that which he praied for: as when he saith; O our God heare the praier of thy seruant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine vpon thy Sanctuarie, that lieth waste, for the Lords sake: O my God incline thine eare and heare, open thine eies and behold our desolations, and the citie whereupon thy name is called; for we doe not present our supplications before thee for our owne righteousness, but for thy tender mercies: O Lorde heare, O Lord forgine; O Lord consider, and doe it, deferre not for thine owne sake, O my God; for thy name is called vpon thy citie, and vpon thy people. Thus both of them praied verie seruently and with great zeale, which

Dan. 9. 17.

the yd. 100.  
to 1000000000  
1000000000  
1000000000  
1000000000  
1000000000

which argued that they had great hope of obtaining their suites, otherwise they would soone haue giuen them ouer, and not haue beene so importunate. For it is most certaine, that according to the hope that we haue of obtaining any thing at the handes of God or man, so are our desires and requestes vnto them more earnest, or more cold, therefore when they praied thus importunately, it appeareth that in this great humilitie of theirs, declared by their fasting and maner of it, they had great hope of obtaining their requests of God, vnto whom they did sue. And thus must we doe in the day of our fasting, I saie we must labour for that measure of faith in gods goodnesse through the blessed merits of Christ our Saviour, that might mooue vs to pray earnestly, and as it were to ctie mightily vnto God for the removing nowe at the last of this grievous plague: that though wee haue iustlie deserued it, and a great deale more,

*And by importunatie of  
praier the  
Lord will be  
overcome.*



yet for the Lords sake it would please him vpon our true repentance, and earnest seeking vnto him for mercie, to turne it away. Which if wee doe, then he vndoubtedly will heare vs in his good time, as hee hath witnessed vnto vs in the Gospell by the Parables, both of the wicked Iudge, who by the importunity of the widow, was overcome at the last, to doe her right; and this was propounded (as Christ himselfe saith) to this end to teach men to pray often, and not to waxe faine; whereupon he inferreth this generall doctrine. Heare what the vnrighteous Iudge saith: and shall not God avenge his elect, which crie daie and night vnto him, though hee suffered long for them? So God will heare those that crie daie and night, that is that pray earnestly and continuallie: And againe in the other parable of the man that came to his friend at midnight to borrow three loaves, who though he was vnwilling at the first,

Luk. 18. 2.

ver. 6. 7.

Luk. 11. 5.

ver

yet because of his importunitie did arise, & gaue him as many as he would. whereupon hee maketh this generall promise to al those that shal thus seeke vnto God, that is, earnestly and without ceasing, that he will heare them, saying: Aske, and it shal be giuen you, seeke and yee shall finde, knocke and it shall be opened vnto you: for euerie one that asketh receaueth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened; that is, if yee seeke and aske after this maner. So by these examples wee may be assured, that God will heare vs for this thing, if we pray vnto him earnestly, & without ceasing, though we haue hitherto scene little successe of our praiers, for the plague is not only not taken away, but is greatly increased euery where.

He often deferreth to giue, that we might bee quickened vnto seruencie of prayer.

And truly the Lord doeth manie times deferre of purpose, to grant that which we aske, and which also he hath promised, and is purposed to giue, that we might be mooued in the feeling of  
OUR

our want to pray earnestly for it : and that the want of it for a time might quicken vp our dead hearts, and dull spirits vnto greater seruencie of prayer : that also when we shall see that we haue such things giuen vnto vs, and that wee haue obtained them by our prayer, yea by long and earnest prayer, wee might make the more account of them, and esteeme them as we ought, and also be so much the more thankfull vnto God for the same. For the Lord indeed hath of his great mercie promised, that if we call vpon him, he will heare vs, as we haue learned euen now out of the Gospell of *S. Luke*, and may further learne out of many other places of Scripture besides, as, Call vpon me in the time of thy trouble, and I will heare thee, and deliuer thee; and many other : but he hath set downe no time, when we shall see and perceiue that hee hath heard vs, sauing that it is sayd, I will heare thee in due time, euen in affliction. Nowe which is the

Psal. 50. 15.

Psal. 10. 1.

most

1538  
A& 1.7.

most conuenient time for God to help vs in , that we must not prescribe vnto him , neither is it alwayes meet for vs to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power : therefore as they be best knowen to his heauenly Maiestie , so wee must leaue the declaration of them to him alone , not doubting , but that he will heare vs in due time, euen in affliction. Hee doth deferre many times of purpose for good causes : both that wee might be stirred vp thereby to pray to him earnestly and continually , not doubting one whit of the trueth of his promises ; and that when we haue our requests granted, we might esteeme of so great a benefit, and be thankfull to him for the same. For assuredly if wee did alwayes finde , that the Lord did giue vs every thing at the first asking (though wee graunt that hee giueth vs continually more than we aske) such is our vnthankfulnesse , that both wee would come vnto him very coldly, and pray

pray drowfilie (for wee would make it  
but an ordinarie matter, Aske & haue) *Therefore if we conti-  
nue in fer-  
uent pray-  
er, the Lord  
will heare vs  
at the last.*  
and also wee would not so highlie e-  
steeme of the things giuen vnto vs, nor  
labor to be so thankfull to him for the  
same, as our bounde duty did require.

Therefore concerning all other things,  
and namely, this present visitation of  
the Plague, the more that the Lord de-  
ferreth to take it away, the more ear-  
nest let vs be in prayer, and let not the  
delay of it quench the heat of our de-  
sire one whit, but kindle it more and  
more, and I do assure you in the word  
of the Lord, that if we faint not in prai-  
er, but lift vp our hearts and hands still  
vnto the Throne of his Mercy, that he  
will in time heare vs, and shew mercie  
vnto vs; and that he will not onely do  
so, but he will make it manifest and ap-  
parant vnto the very soules and consci-  
ences of vs all.

This therefore is another most ex-  
cellent vse and end of fasting, euen to  
quicken vs vp vnto greater feruency in  
praier *The out-  
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most conuenient time for God to help vs in , that we must not prescribe vnto him ; neither is it alwayes meet for vs to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power ; therefore as they be best knowen to his heauenly Maiestie , so wee must leaue the declaration of them to him alone , not doubting , but that he will heare vs in due time, euen in affliction. Hee doth deferre many times of purpose for good causes : both that wee might be stirred vp thereby to pray to him earnestly and continually , not doubting one whit of the trueth of his promises ; and that when we haue our requests granted, we might esteeme of so great a benefit, and be thankfull to him for the same. For assuredly if wee did alwayes finde , that the Lord did giue vs every thing at the first asking (though wee graunt that hee giueth vs continually more than we aske) such is our vnthankfulnesse , that both wee would come vnto him very coldly, and pray

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ences of vs all.

This therefore is another most ex-  
cellent vse and end of fasting, euen to  
quicken vs vp vnto greater seruency in  
praier

*The out-  
ward absti-  
nence must  
quicken vs  
vp vnto ser-  
uencie of*

prayer: for as we finde by experience, when our bellies are full, and we are in the abundance of all pleasures and outward blessings, wee are not so fit for prayer: and therefore a sober diet, and a moderate vse of all other of Gods creatures and benefits will alwayes make vs the more fit for prayer: but when the bodie is pinched with hunger, and the want of other necessarie helpes meet for it, the feeling of our want shall be a meanes to set a sharper edge vpon our prayers, to make them more piercing, and as it were to giue a wing vnto them to flie aloft aboue the clouds, euen to make them enter into heauen, and to come before the throne of God. We ought then in these daies of abstinence thus to profit by the feeling of the want of our bodies, so to iudge our selues vnwoorthy not onely of all that which wee abstaine from, but of all other things besides, yea of life it selfe, that we thereby be moued most earnestly to seeke to God for

for his pardon, and for the bestowing  
of all vpon vs againe : and by howe  
much the more wee doe so, and pro-  
fesse that in our selues by reason of our  
sinnes we are vnwoorthy of any thing  
in the world, by so much the more let  
vs hope from the mercy and promises  
of God, and seeke accordingly that in  
Christ Iesus, whom hee hath made Heb. 1. 2.  
heire of all things, we may be founde Rom. 8. 17  
woorthie of all, and fellow heires of  
them with him, as the Apostle spea-  
keth.

And euen as a man if he were con-  
demned to death would sue earnestly  
for his pardon; especially if hee were  
lead from the iudge to the place of ex-  
ecution, and were also vpon the lad-  
der, and had the rope about his necke :  
and the nearer he were to death, and  
had the verie badges and tokens of it  
vpon him, the more earnest suter wold  
he be for his pardon, if hee coulde but  
conceauie that there were any hope of  
it. So we the more that by this holie

exercise of fasting we see, and professe that we are woorthy of all Gods punishments and plagues, yea of eternal death and condemnation it selfe, by so much the more earnestlie wee must praie that God would forgiue vs our sinnes and spare vs. Therefore in the daies of fasting there must be a speciall kinde of struing with God in praier, and wee must as it were wrestle with him therein, and neuer giue him ouer, or suffer him to haue rest, vntil he haue sent vs away with some blessing: Euen as it is saide of the holy patriarke *Jacob*, that in his returne homeward from *Laban*, as he did praie vnto God most feruently, so all night long he wrestled with an angell in the shape of a man, that is, with God himselfe so appearing vnto him, and hee held out with him in wrestling euen vnto the morning, and then he said vnto him, let me goe, for the morning appeareth, vnto whom he answered, I will not let thee goe, except thou blesse me, and so he helde

we must  
wrestle, and  
strive with  
God in our  
praers.

Gen. 32. 26.



held him fast stil: & then he bestowed  
 vpon him this great blessing by chang-  
 ing his name from *Jacob* to *Israel*, that  
 because hee had power, and had pre-  
 uailed with God, hee should preuaile  
 with men much more. So that the vi-  
 sion of the angell wrestling with him,  
 and the change of his name tended  
 both to one end, namely to assure him,  
 that God had heard his prayer, which  
 hee made before, and would deli-  
 uer him out of the hand of *Eſau*, whom  
 he feared: and therefore whereas hee  
 was called at his birth *Jacob*; that is,  
 one that holdeth by the heele, (and so  
 ready to ouerthrow him) for this was  
 he borne holding his brother *Eſau* by  
 the heele, in token that in time hee  
 should by the power of God preuaile  
 against him, and so also against all his  
 enemies: now he is called *Israel*, that is,  
 a prince of the strong God, because (as  
 the interpretation is giuen in the text)  
 he had power with God, and shoulde  
 preuaile with men; that is, he had pre-

Gen. 32.11

Gen. 25.26

Gen. 32.28

hailed with God in his praier, as was declared vnto him in the vision of wrestling, and should preuaile against *Esau*, and al other his enimies, but how he did and should heereafter preuaile with God, and obtaine all things of him the vision did shew, namely, that hee praied so feruently and so continually, that he did not giue ouer vntil he had some assurance from the Lord by his holie spirit, that he had heard him, and would defend & blesse him, according vnto his own desire, & the Lords promise. Thus must wee also strue with the Lord in our praers, as the A-

Gen. 32.9. postle speaketh to the *Romanes*, and requireth of them, that they would strue with him by praier to God for him: and we must put all our strength to it, as *Jacob* did, when he wrestled with the angel. And to see it againe more cleerly in the same comparison: As a man that wrestleth for the best game will put all his might and skill to it, and wil not giue ouer as long as he hath anie thing.

Rom. 15.30

thing in himfelfe, that he might preuaile: fo must we in our praier be so earnest & importunate with the Lord, that we rife not vp from praier, or depart away from him, vntill hee haue blessed vs: and the harder that we find it to obtaine anie thing because of our finnes, the more earnestly must wee strue in praier for it. Therefore now in these daies of fasting let vs stirre vp our felues vnto praier, and strue againft all vnfitnesse, that might hinder vs, and as for other things, so that this great mortalitie might haue an ende, without which feruencie of praier, all our fasting is nothing woorth.

Seeing then that feruencie and continuance in praier is so proper vnto the time of fasting (as we haue heard) and it is specially vndertaken to that end: we may see by this also how farre the church of Rome & al Papists, are from the true fast prescribed in Gods word, & practised of his seruants (though they would be thought to be the onely

*The papists had no speciall praier vpon their fasting daies.*

men in the world that fast and pray. For vpon the Fridaies and other fasting daies there was no speciall time appointed, as also not in Lent, appointed for praier: neither did manie of them that professed fasting, come to the Church at all to that end: and if some of them did praie vpon their Saints eeuē at night, yet many did not, which were bound to the fast: and they that did, all the rest of the daie were without praier; and vpon those daies they went about their businesse, as at all other times, especially vnto noone, or vnto eeuē-song, as they called it. Whereas the whole day of fast is altogether of the nature of the Sabbath, both for resting from worke, & also for sanctifying of the time; and therefore vpon those daies, they had holy conuocations and assemblies for the worde and praier: as in the booke

eu. 1. 6 31. of *Leuiticus*, the yeerely day of fast for  
 eu. 23. 27. the Iewes is called a Sabbath of rest,  
 and besides it is further added: therein  
 you

you shall haue an holie conuocation,  
 and yee shall doe no worke. There-  
 fore when these Catholikes (falsely so  
 called) did rest in the bare ceremonie  
 of fasting, and did not giue themselues  
 that daie to praier more then at other  
 times ( for the most part ) they neg-  
 lected that, that was principall in it,  
 and whereunto it should be referred.  
 And so we see, what the Lord requi-  
 reth of vs al at this present, and to what  
 end we abstaine, euen that we hauing  
 nothing to hinder vs inwardly, nor  
 outwardly in our bodies to presse vs  
 downe to the earth, our mindes might  
 be lifted vp in all seruencie of praier  
 vnto our heauenly father in the medi-  
 ation of our Lord and Sauour so  
 much the more.

To this end we must giue our selues  
 as much as we can to a deepe and se- *The serious*  
 rious meditation of. that that is the *consideration*  
 cause of our fast, whether it bee anie *of our pre-*  
 great punishment of God already vpō *sent estate*  
 vs, or imminent and hanging ouer our *will incre-*  
 seruencie *praier.*



ona. 3. 5.

head, and ready shortly to befall vs: or  
 it be some grace and blessing of God,  
 that we want, or we are afraid to loose,  
 that thereby we might see, and feele in  
 what a wofull and miserable case wee  
 are in, or should be, in respect of that,  
 if the Lord should not heare vs, and  
 be mercifull vnto vs. As we see how  
 the people of *Nineue* hearing that their  
 destructiō was threatned against them  
 by the Lords prophet, and that with-  
 in a short time, euen fortie daies,  
 they beleeued God, (as it is saide in  
 that storie) that is, they were perswa-  
 ded, that for their sinnes they had de-  
 serued it, & also that God had sent him  
 to warne them of it; they therefore  
 perceauing themselues to be in such a  
 wofull case, the king proclaimed a fast,  
 and willed euerie man to crie mighte-  
 ly vnto God, that is, to praie earnestly  
 vnto him, to forgiue them, and spare  
 them: so that they did not onely praie  
 thus feruently vnto God, but the con-  
 sideration of their estate moued them  
 vnto

vnto it, which if by beleeuing the prophet they had not acknowledged, they could not haue come vnto it in this acceptable measure. So in the daies of *Hest. 3. 13.*

*Hester*, when *Haman* had obtained a decree from the king, and it was sealed with his ring, and the letters were sent by postes into all the kinges prouinces:

The tenor whereof was, to roote out, to kill, and to destroy all the Iewes,

*Hest. 4. 3.*

both younge and old, children and women in one day, in euerie prouince

*2. Cor. 12. 13.*

and place, whether the kings charge, and his comission came: there was

great sorrow among the Iewes, and fasting and weeping, and mourning,

and many lay in sackcloth and ashes, and three daies and three nights they

gaue themselues to fasting and praier: so that the knowledge of this estate of

theirs that they came vnto, by hearing of the kings comission granted out

against them, did driue them to this great sorrow for it, appearing in weeping

and mourning, and it so made them

them to praie thus earnestly, and so long, euen three daies & three nights together: which they would not, nor could haue done, if they had not by taking knowledge of the kings letters, perceaued their estate to bee so desperate, and so forlorne, as indeed it was. Likewise in the time of the *Iudges*, when the tribe of *Beniamin* had twise ouerthrowne the rest of the children of Israel, and had in two set battels slaine 40000. of them: they seeing themselves by the slaughter of so manie greatly weakened, fell a weeping before the Lord, and fasted that day vnto euening, and asked counsell of the Lord, not onely by *Vrim* and *Thummim*, but by feruent praier, to shew them what they shoulde doe. These then seeing themselves in so ill a case, that many of their brethren were slaine already, or that they, and themselves were like to bee slaine, thought it their bound duty, to seeke vnto God earnestly, to turne that destruction

Judg. 20. 26

struction away, and to staie his heauie hand, and so he did.

So must we also doe at this present, The lamentable estate of many in respect of this pestilence, may moue vs vnto seruants prayer. that we might come to this earnestnes of prayer spoken of, and necessarily required in such times of fasting: we must (I say) well weigh and consider of the great calamitie and miserie that is among vs, and in what a pitifull case many of our deare brethren are, and haue beene a long time, without any intermission, how they die daylie and weekly in the chiefe cities and townes of the land, both in these parts and other countreis: as in *Norwich* about an hundred a weeke, and in *London* about three thousand weekly, and thus it hath beene many weeks together, and it spreadeth euery where in small villages, and threatens euery where, and none can tell almost in what place long to be free. During which time of contagion and pestilence it hath come to passe, that many haue had their louing wiues pulled out of their bowels,

soms, some their prouident husbands taken from them: others haue lost their parēts the stay of their liues, others are left childlesse; some haue neither brother nor sister left, master nor seruant, friend, kinsfolke, nor neighbour: yea euen the whole house and familie is swypt cleane away, so that there is nothing but weeping & mourning, sighing and sobbing, wailing and wringing of hands, spending away their time in sorow without taste in any meat, or comfort in sleepe, or any thing els, looking themselues euery houre when they should be smitten with the same hand of God, & so follow to the graue them that haue lately gone before the: we I say must wisely consider of these things, that seeing nothing before our eyes in these times of so great desolation, but the vntimely death and destruction of our deare brethren, kindred, and friends, yea of our selues shortly, if God be not mercifull vnto vs, might mooue vs to pray earnestly vnto God, both



both for our selues and for them : and truly if we could so consider of these things as we ought, it might moue vs in greater humilitie before God, and compassion toward our brethren, to powre out not only at this present, but night and day heereafter, most ardent prayers & supplications vnto the Lord, that in his blessed time hee would put an happie end to so great destruction, and that it might be sufficient vnto his Fatherly goodnesse, that he hath thus farre proceeded in iudgement against vs, and against them already. I say the deepe consideration & inward feeling of this common miserie would make vs to be more often & feruent in prayer vnto God, and not onely thus publicly, but priuately also.

But I can not tell how it cometh to passe (the more is the pittie) through the great hardnesse of mens hearts, that many of vs thinke little of it, or not so much as they should, because it is so far from them : yet let them know assuredly,

*As the feeling of all our wants will make vs earnest to haue them supplied.*

assuredly, that it may soone come nearer, God knoweth how soone; and in the meane season; if they will not pitie others, and pray for them, none shall pitie and pray for them, when they shall be in the like case. So then as they that are in great want of food, and see that they haue nothing at home, bread nor meat, nor money to buy any thing with, are driuen to seeke abroad for themselves & for their children: & besides they will be importunate where they come, and haue no nay, their necessitie is so great, that it compels them vnto it, euen sometimes to goe beyond the bounds of modestie and good manners; so if we could aswell see and feele this great miserie that we and our brethren are in, it would make vs to be so importunate, with the Lord in our prayers, that we would haue no nay at his handes, but still stand knocking at the gate of his mercie, vntill hee hath opened, and sent vs away with a gracious answer, as *Dauid* in the one & fifty

Psalme

Psalme pressed downe with the hea-  
 uie burden of his sinnes did crie vnto  
 God againe and againe for mercie,  
 and would not haue his mouth stop-  
 ped, vntill the Lord had mercie vpon  
 him saying; Haue mercie vpon me O  
 God, according to thy louing kind- Psa. 137.  
 nesse, according to the multitude of  
 thy cōpassions put away mine iniqui-  
 ties, wash me throughly from mine  
 iniquitie, and clesse me from my sin,  
 purge me with Hysope, washe me,  
 make mee to heare ioy and gladnesse,  
 and so foorth as followeth; where e-  
 uerie verse almost containeth a seuerall  
 petition, earnestly craving mercie of  
 God for his sinnes; yea as blinde Bar-  
 timaeus cried after Christ in the waies Mar. 10. 46.  
 Iesus the sonne of David haue mercie  
 on me, and manie rebuked him, be-  
 cause he should hold his peace, but he  
 cried much more, O sonne of David  
 haue mercy on me, and would neuer  
 leaue calling and crying, vntill Christ  
 stode still, and commanded him to  
 be

be called: so we in this case should neuer leaue calling vpon God, vntill by diminishing of the plague we might see some token of his mercie. Nay we should be like to the woman of *Syrophenisse*, who came suing to Christ for her daughter, and saide; Haue mercie on me O Lord, the sonne of *Dauid*, and he by his silence seemed not to regard her, and when his Disciples did speake to him for her, he answered them, as though she were not to be regarded, saying, I am not sent but to the lost sheepe of the house of Israel; & when shee came neerer her-selfe, and saide, Lord helpe me, then he seemed cleane to cast her off, and to leaue her without all hope, in saying, It is not good to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to whelpes: yet for al this she would not glieue over, her need was so great, but desired as a whelp to eate of the crummes, that fell from her masters table; and so Christ heard her at the last, and said vnto her, O woman great

And by ear-  
nest suite we  
shall finde, a  
supplie in  
time.

is thy faith, be it to thee, as thou desirest, and her daughter was made whole at that houre: Euen so our selues, though we may seeme all this while to haue praied in vaine, and to haue lost our labour, and the Lorde God not to regard vs, because the plague is not one whit lessened, but rather increased; yet because our need is so great, let vs not giue ouer, but in all seruencie of praier hold out, and waite vpon God: and how? Euen Psal. 123. as the eies of seruants looke vnto the hand of their maisters, and as the eies of a maiden vnto the hand of her mistresse, so let our eies waite vpon the Lord our God vntill he haue mercie vpon vs. And let euerie one saie, I Psal. 130. haue waited on the Lorde, my soule hath waited, and I haue trusted in his worde; my soule waiteth on the Lord more then the morning watch watcheth for the morning, and so let vs encourage all Israel, euen the people of God to waite vpon him: for with him



is mercy, & with him is great redemption, and he wil redeeme them from all their iniquities : that is, as he hath manie waies and meanes to deliuer those that be his, so he will vpon their repentance forgine them all their sinnes, and much more deliuer from the deserued punishment of the same.

the consci-  
ence of our  
unworthi-  
nesse must  
not hinder  
us, but ra-  
ther make  
us more fer-  
uent in prai-

Moreover that wee might praie so earnestly as we should, let vs further consider our great vnwoorthinesse by reason of our innumerable sinnes, that when wee shall see, that whether wee looke to our selues, or to other, there is no cause that the Lord should heare and helpe vs, for wee haue not done our dutie as we ought, wee haue not profited by his worde and great patience; nay wee haue by the abuse of them, and by other of our sinnes pro- uoked his wrath against vs, and haue deserued that this deadly plague shuld continew and make an end of vs all: we may be importunate with him to spare vs, that so, though not for anie thing

thing that is in vs, of his great mercie  
 for Christes sake by opportunitie hee  
 may be ouercome: as wee haue seene  
 by the parable of the wicked Iudge  
 how he will be: and as we haue seene  
 how *Jacob* would not giue ouer wrest-  
 ling, vntill he had blessed him, at the  
 last obtained the blessing. So the Lord  
 seeing that we are not wearie of cal-  
 ling vpon him, though he finde vs vn-  
 woorthie, might heare and helpe vs.  
 And so let not the conscience of our  
 vnwoorthinesse stoppe our mouthes,  
 & hinder our praiers, but rather mooue  
 vs to be the more earnest, confessing  
 the same, as *Ezra* doth. I am confoun- Ezra 9.6.  
 ded and ashamed to lift vp mine eies  
 vnto thee my God, for our iniquities  
 are increased ouer our head, and our  
 trespasse is growen vp vnto the hea-  
 uen: and as *Daniel* doth, O Lord vnto Dan. 9. 8.  
 vs appertaineth open shame, to our  
 kings, to our princes, and to our fa-  
 thers, because we haue sinned against  
 thee: yet compassion and forgiuenesse.

is in the Lord our God, albeit we haue rebelled against him : and so may we truly say of our selues, and of our land and countrey wherein we liue.

and the con-  
eration of  
is, that  
ne can  
spe vs but  
of Lord.

And lastly for this present let vs consider, that as in no other thing, so in this most of all, none can helpe vs but the Lord; there are meanes appointed for euery thing, but vnlesse hee giue them we can not haue them, and then also the right vse and successe of them is of the Lord: so that he can not onely denie them vnto vs, but curse them when we haue them, that they shall do vs no good: so that we may truly saie, My helpe commeth from the Lorde, who hath made both heauen & earth; therefore we had need to praie to him so much the more earnestly: for the trusting to this and that, hindereth our praier. But the time cutteth mee off from this, and so I leaue it to be supplied by the spirit of God, which is able to giue you vnderstanding in all things.

## HOMIL. V.

The fifth Homilie doth further intreat of  
 seruencie of praier requisite in fasting;  
 and to the end we may consider, what  
 great things God hath promised to fa-  
 sting and praier; and how he hath per-  
 formed the same, not onely to the godly,  
 but euen to the wicked, who haue ther-  
 by obtained great deliuerances; yea  
 how men by humble supplication haue  
 preuailed with men, euen with their  
 enemies.



**I** Am at this present to  
 proceede in that argu-  
 ment, that I entred into  
 the last day, and could  
 not then well finish for  
 want of time, namely to continue fur-  
 ther to declare, how wee may attaine  
 vnto that seruencie of praier that hath  
 beene spoken of, which is so necessary  
 in the fasting we haue in hand. There-  
 fore besides all that hath beene said to

To quicken  
 vs vp fur-  
 ther vnto  
 seruient pra-  
 er, we must  
 consider.

this end, we are lastly to consider, that we might be mooued to praie so earnestly as we should, to consider (I say) the gracious promises, that God hath made to all those that haue, or shall heereafter at any time hold this exercise of fasting vnto him in any measure of trueth; and how the same from time to time haue beene performed vnto them: insomuch that though the beginning of their fast hath beene full of heauinesse, and with much sorrow for their sinnes, and for the wrath of God against them appearing in some grieuous punishment; yet the end thereof hath beene with much reioicing and comfort in assured hope both of the free pardon and forgiuenesse of them, with perfect reconciliation vnto God, and also with good hope of obtaining of all such things, as they haue sued for by earnest and seruent praier. And first of all concerning the promise that the Lord of his great mercy, hath made to all those that

seeke

*First what  
promises God  
hath made to  
those that  
seeke vnto  
him in fa-  
sting and  
praier.*



seeke vnto him in all humilitie by fasting and praier, we may see what the prophet *Ioel* saith. Who exhorting the people to fasting and praier, because of that great calamitie, that was vpon them, by reason that the fruites of the earth were so wholly destroyed, (for that which was left of the Palmer-worme the Grasshopper had eaten; and the residue of the Grasshopper had the Canker-worme eaten, and the residue of the Canker-worme had the Caterpillar eaten: exhorting them I saie, to turne vnto the Lord with all their hart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and to rent their hearts, and not their clothes, and to turne vnto the Lord their God: that is, not their clothes onely, according to the maner of that time in great sorrow, but their hearts especiallie, that so their sorrow might bee in truth, & not in appearance onelie, setteth before them the great mercy of god to al those that so come vnto him,

Ioel 1. 4.

cap. 2. 1

saying; For the Lord is gracious and mercifull, slowe to anger, and of great kindnesse, and repenteth him of the euill; who knoweth if he will returne, namely to his accustomed mercifull dealing, and repent, that is, of that euill, that he might further bring vpon them, and leaue a blessing behinde him, euen a meat offering, and a drinke offering vnto the Lorde their God? that is some thing to be serued with, for the glorie of his name, least his seruice should faile: as hee had complained before; that the meat offring and drinke offring was cut off from the house of the Lorde, for which the Priestes the Lordes ministers did mourne.

psl 1. 7.

Then we see, how the Prophet in the name of the Lord doth promise vnto them, that if they would thorowly humble themselues for their sinnes the cause of this great affliction, noted by the rending of their hearts, though the Lord had begunne to punish them already,

ready, and that most grievously, yet he would stay his heavy hand and bestow some blessing vpon them : where in saying, Who knoweth, or who can tell? his meaning is nothing lesse than to call it into question, or any wayes to make them doubt of it, but rather to consider the hardnesse of the thing, and so to seeke for it the more earnestly, that they might haue some hope of it : as if he had sayd, Seeing God is so mercifull, as he had spoken of him before, calling him, Gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindnes, and one that repenteth him of the euill, there is no doubt of the thing, but that if they could humble themselues as he required, and pray earnestly, though he had begun to punish them already, yet hee would repent and spare them. As also Iona 3.9. it is sayd in the Prophet *Jona*, by the King of *Nineue* (who proclaimed a fast, and willed all men to put on sackcloth, and to crie mightily vnto the Lord, and euery man to turne from his euill

euill way, and from the wickednesse of his hands) Who can tell, if God will turne, and repent, and turne away from his fierce wrath, that wee perish not? which he vttereth after this maner, saying, Who can tell? to shew the hardnesse and difficultie of it; that they might crie vnto God the more earnestly or mightily, as hee also willett them there. So that as from the forenamed place of *Joel*, wee haue a commandement to fast publikely, when Gods hand is heauie vpon vs, as it is now, and hath been a long time, when as hee thus speaketh: Thus sayth the Lord, turne you vnto me with all your hearts and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, & so forth: so from thence also we haue a promise (as we haue heard) that if we can humble our selues thorowly, iudging and condemning our selues, as we ought, which is meant by renting of our hearts, as was sayd before, and turne with all our hearts from our sinnes, euen

Joel 2.12.

E 2. 2901

even with sorrow and grieve for them  
vnto the Lord, that he himselfe will in  
this punishment of ours also repent,  
and leaue a blessing behinde, as is sayd  
there, that is, some cause to praise and  
magnifie his holy Name : and the rea-  
son, why we haue it no sooner is, that  
men haue not all this while cast down  
themselues before the high throne of  
Gods iudgement, as they should, and  
vnfainedly leaue all their sins; which if  
men could come vnto in that maner &  
measure that they ought, then heere is  
a most gracious & sure promise made  
vnto vs from the Lord by the mouth  
of his holy Prophet, that hee will be  
mercifull vnto vs, and spare vs; which  
he will also vndoubtedly performe, for  
he is Trueth it selfe.

Therefore that we might doe this  
that we doe in faith, I meane continue  
still to fast and pray, and not giue it o-  
uer, or wax wearie of it, as of our selues  
wee are too prone vnto it : yea that in  
thus abstaining, wee might pray ear-  
nestly

*which pro-  
mises wee  
must at this  
present see  
before our  
eyes.*



nestly vnto God, to stay his heauie hand, and to put an happie end at the last vnto this long and great mortality, Let vs consider that euen this promise is made to vs, and written for this very time, and for this purpose, that if in this fasting euery man will turne from all his sinnes with his whole heart, and be sorie for them euen from the very bottoine of his heart : that the Lord himselfe will repent of all that euill that he hath begun to do vnto vs ; and though hee hath taken away many thousands alreadie, yet he will spare the rest, and leaue some euery where to praise his Name. So many therefore among vs, as doe thus with true repentance turne from their sinnes, to serue the Lord in holinesse and newnesse of life, may praie with great hope and comfort for mercie from the Lord, for the promise is made vnto them, whosoever they be ; but all they that yeeld to this outward & bodily exercise of fasting, but are not thus broken in their hearts, nor

not affected in their soules, neither haue any care so to be, as they cannot call vpon the name of the Lord with anie earnestnesse of praier, but all is done formally and ceremonially of them, so they cannot haue anie great hope of being heard, but shall speede thereafter.

And especially we may see plainly from the eighteenth verse of that chapter vnto the end of the same, how plainly and largely he doth promise, not onely a remoouing of that great punishment, which was verie much; and for the certaintie of it, and to assure her faith of it, speaketh of it, as though it were alreadie come, saying, then will the Lord be iealous ouer his lande and spare his people: and againe, be not afraid yee beastes of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are greene, for the tree beareth her fruite, the figge tree and the vine doe giue their force; be glad then yee children of Sion, and reioice in the Lord

*which promises are most certaine and belonging to vs, as well as to the Iewes.*

*Ioc. 2. 18.*

*Ysa. 23.*

Lord your God, for he hath giuen you the raine of righteousness, that is, as much as is meet for you in this great drought: In al which words he speaking of this benefite to come, as though it were already giuen them, (according to the maner of the prophets) doth shew, that he had alreadie receaued this promise from the Lorde, that if they did thus thoroughly cast downe themselues in the guiltinesse of their sinnes, and conscience of their deserts, he would spare them and blesse them: and besides hee would poure out his holy spirit most plentifully vpon them. And this vndoubtedly is set downe for our consolation, and instruction, to shew vs, what in the like case we may looke for: And truely it must needes be so, for there is no respect of persons with God, and the promises of his worde though spoken vnto some particular people, vpon some occasion, yet are for all ages and times, and doe generally belong to all alike, vpon the same

same condition. Therefore when as it saide to them, Turne vnto the Lorde with all your heart, and rent your hearts, and when you are thus humbled, the Lord will returne for your good, and so foorth, as it followeth in that place, it is spoken not to them onely, but to all such, as in the like case shall thus do: and so vnto vs now, that we may be assured, that if we thus do, in that measure that we doe it in truth, we shall finde mercie with the Lorde, and so may praie for it most earnestlie in faith, as they were willed to doe.

And the rather that we might thus doe, and be confirmed in the truth of this hope, let vs vnto this gracious promise, that we haue heard of, ioine the consideration of all the fastes of the faithfull seruants of God, set downe in the old and new Testament, and see what hath beene the issue of them, and whether they haue not obtained the things, that they haue thus sued for, and if the Lord hath not turned their  
Secondly  
consider the  
fulfilling of  
these promi-  
ses to al those  
that haue  
used fasting  
and prayer.  
 sorrow

Isa. 61. 3.

Judg. 20.

sorrow into ioy, their fasting into feasting, and so hath giuen (as the prophet speaketh) to them that haue mourned, beautie for ashes, the oile of ioy for mourning, and the garment of gladnesse for the spirit of heauinesse. And heere wee may first of all consider, what was the fruite of that fast, which the *Israelites* helde in the time of the *Judges*, when for the wickednesse done to the *Leuites* concubine, they fought against the *Beniamites*, and were ouerthrowne in the first battle, so that there was slaine that daie two and twentie thousand: they fasted and praied, & set vpon them the second time, & yet were ouerthrowne in that battle also; for the men of *Beniamin* slew downe to the ground of the children of *Israel* againe, eightene thousand, all which could handle the sword: then they fasted and praied the second time, and got the victory, when they were thoroughly humbled: So that by fasting & praier they preuailed against



against them at the last, though not at the first, and might haue done sooner, if they had beene sufficiently humbled before. Wee haue hitherto with the rest of our brethren fasted and praied often that this grieuous plague raging in manie places might haue an ende, and yet haue not thus farre preuailed with the Lord, but the people stil die euerie where in great number; yea it hath increased greatly since wee began: so that ours and their estate is worse then it was before we began, euen as the *Israelites* did fall by thousands before their enemies after that they had by fasting and praier asked counsell of the Lord: but if wee can hold out in this exercise vnto the end, and not be discouraged, though wee see little successe at the first, and the more that wee see the hand of God increased against vs in iustice, the more wee labour to grow in humilitie and feruency of praier, then we doubt not, but at the last by the event, as the *Israe-*

*As the Israelites thereby at the last preuailed against the Beniamites.*

L

lites

*lives* did, we shall see that we haue not all this while lost our labour, and called vpon the name of God in vaine. Therefore that we might with assured confidence, and good hope perseuer in this holy exercise of fasting and praier, besides the promise of God made vnto it, which we haue heard, let vs set this worthy example before our eyes to comfort vs, that though the beginning hath beene full of sorrowe, as it was with them, yet the end will be full of ioy and consolation to our selues and others, and to the praise and glorie of almightie God.

Hest. 3. 6.

To this we may adioine that notable and famous example, that we haue in the booke of *Hester*: where it is said, that *Haman* for the malice that hee bare against *Mordecai*, sought the vter destruction of all the *Jewes*: for he thought it too little to laie handes on *Mordecai* himselfe alone, and because they had shewed him the people of *Mordecai*, he sought to destroy all the *Jewes*,

*Jewes*, that were through out the whole kingdome of *Ahasuerus*; and to this end he had obtained a Decree Heb. 3. 13. from the king, to roote out and to destroye, and to kill them all, both yoong and old, children and women in one daie. Then all the *Jewes*, at the aduise and commandement of *Queene Hester*, did fast and praie vnto God three daies and three nights, to intreat the Lord, that he might find fauour with the King, that this wicked deuise Heb. 4. 16. 17. might bee frustrate and disanulled: whereby it came to passe, that the Lord in whose hands are the hearts of all men to turne, euen as the riuers of waters, and who hath saide that when a mans waies doe please the Lord, hee Pro. 16. 7. will make his enemies his friends, did so change the Kings heart, (I say) that they had thereby not onely to defend themselves, and to gather themselves together, and to stand for their liues: but also to roote out and to destroy all Heb. 8. 11. the power of the people, and of the

And by this  
meanes the  
Iewes did o-  
uerthrow  
the diuelish  
practise of  
proud Ha-  
man.

Hest. 9. 28.

prouince that vexed them, both chil-  
dren and women, and to spoile their  
goods : and so also they did, and God  
blessed them therein : yea and *Haman*  
the *Iewes* great aduersarie was hanged  
vpon the high gibbet, which hee had  
prepared for *Mordecay*, and after that  
tenne of his sonnes also were hanged,  
and *Mordecay* and all the *Iewes* were  
greatly aduanced and honored, and  
the daies of weeping and fasting were  
turned into great reioicing and fea-  
sting yeerely. Thus we see how won-  
derfully God did blesse them, being  
so humbled in fasting and praier be-  
fore him, and what great things they  
obtained thereby, as not onelie the  
sauing of their liues & goods thereby,  
but the vtter ruine and ouerthrow of  
their most deadly and professed eni-  
mies : and therefore no doubt if wee  
could humble our selues this way, and  
praie earnestly, as they did, if we were  
as neere deathes doore, as they were,  
and had receaued euen the sentence of  
death

death in our selues, as they had, it were possible for vs to escape it, and to finde mercie with the Lord, as they haue done before vs, and that not onely for our selues, but for our brethren, as they did. For as hee hath promised, that if we turne ynto him vnfaignedly, in the midst of destruction, he will leaue a blessing behinde him for vs, as was said before out of *Ioel*: so heere in this people wee see the truth and accomplishment of it, *2. Cor. 1. 9.* *Ioel. 1. 14.*

Besides wee may consider of that woorthy example of Gods mercy this way shewed vpon those that humbled themselues by fasting and praier in the daies of *Iehoshaphat*, that good King of *Iudah*, as it is set downe in the second booke of the *Chronicles*: where it is saide, that the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, and the people of mount *Seir* came forth to battle against him: and hee fearing the danger that might befall him, and his people, proclaimed a fast throughout all *Iudah*: and praied ear-



nestly to God for himselfe, and for them: which praier of his is there set downe: And before they had ended their praier, the spirit of the Lord came vpon *Iahaziel* a *Leuite*, in the midst of the congregation, who by the spirit of prophesie did foretell the victorie, saying, Yee shall not need to fight in this battle, stand still, mooue not, and behold the saluation of the Lorde towards you: O *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, feare yee not, neither be afraid, to morrow goe out against them, and the Lord will be with you. And so it came to passe: for their enemies slew one another, euen the children of *Ammon* and *Moab* rose against the inhabitants of mount *Seir*, to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of *Seir*, euerie one helped to destroy an other: and so the *Jewes* entred vpon the spoile of them, & found among them abundance both of substance, and of bodies laden with pretious iewels, which

2. Chro. 20.  
17.

And king  
*Iehoshaphat*  
thereby ob-  
tained vi-  
ctorie a-  
gainst their  
enemies.

which they tooke for themselves, till they could carie no more: and were three daies in gathering of the spoile, for it was much: and in the fourth day they praised God in the valley of *Berachah*; which from that day had the name of that action, for there they blessed and praised God for the victorie, which he had given them, and so called it the valley of blessing or praise: and so they returned home to *Jerusalem* with great joy. Here we may consider the fruit of their fasting to be this, that when by earnest prayer they sought vnto God, being in great feare, as it is saide of the King, that he feared, and set himselfe to seeke the Lord, then he made them to reioice. So if we could thus rightly consider of this hand of God stretched out against vs, that seeing our sinnes to be the cause of it, wee would feare God and his wrath, and suffer it to worke vpon our consciences, and seeke vnto God in feare earnestly to turne it awaie, it.

2. Chr.: 6.

might please him so to blesse vs at the last, that we should haue great cause to reioice. But verie few doe so laie it to heart, that they haue all this while any thing profited by it in the true feare of God, to repent them of any thing that is past, & to determine a better course heereafter, and therefore cannot so earnestly seeke vnto God as they should, for the remoouing of it, and so it may iustly still be continued, till it worke in vs this true feare: which God grant that it may speedilie doe. But let so manie as by the due consideration of this visitation haue set themselves to feare the Lord, and to seeke vnto him in truth, consider how God was found of this people, and so will be of vs in his good time: and as hee caused them after their great feare, to returne home with as much ioy: so he may bring those that for feare haue with griefe forsaken their townes and houses, bring them home againe with as much reioicing: and whereas they haue

haue sown with teares, they may reap with ioy, and going out weeping, and carying precious seede, might returne with ioy and bring their sheaues, as the prophet speaketh.

Lastly concerning this matter we may see how the prophet *Iona* coming to *Nineue* according to the cō-<sup>Ion. 3. 4.</sup>

mandement of the Lord, to denounce Gods heauie iudgement against them for their sinnes, euen that within forty daies the whole citie should be over-

throwne: the King beleeuing this fearful curse threatned to bee iust and de-

serued, proclaimed a fast to this ende,

that euerie one turning from his euill waies, and from the wickednesse of

his hands, that they might crie mightie vnto the Lord, as they did: Where

upon it came to passe, that God seeing their works to be good, and that they

turned from their euill waies indeed, heard their praers, granted their re-

quests, and did repent him of the euill, that he had said hee would doe vnto

By this  
means the  
Nineuites  
escaped that  
destruction  
that was  
threatned a-  
gainst them.

old

them,

them, and did it not. Thus we see againe what was the effect of this fast which they held, (in great ignorance no doubt and much weakenesse, yet in truth) namely, that the Lord seeing them sufficiently humbled by the ministerie of his Prophets, in the guiltinesse of their sinne, and the deserued destruction threatned against them, & euerie one to forsake their euill waies, for which he was iustly offended with them: he staied that plague, which he had threatned, and had otherwise most certainly brought vpon them. And this also may greatly confirme our hope in this seruice of ours, that though for our sinnes we must needs confesse, that wee haue deserued not onely this beginning and continuance of the pestilence; but vtter destruction; yet if euerie man would so wholly leave his euill waies, that the Lord (who is the searcher of the heart and reines) might see it, and take knowledge of it, and of that repentance and amendement of life,



life, that should be in all, and so then they would crie mightily vnto God, as these did; he would yet repent him of the euill, which he hath otherwise further determined to bring vpon vs, and not do it: but might stay this grievous plague from spreading like a canker, and from further comming into those places where yet it is not: and in those places, that are infected with it, he might so diminish it from day to daie, that it cause not a finall destruction, as was threatned to the *Ninuites*, and we haue iustly deserued.

Therefore to conclude this one point, that we might haue courage and comfort in this that wee doe by a sure and certaine expectation of some blessed fruit of it in time, we haue hitherto seene, how the Lord of his great mercy and truethe hath neuer failed them, that in fasting and prayer (according to his owne ordinance) haue sought vnto him in truethe: that we ha-  
 uing so great a cloud of witnesses (as

By this experience in others, wee must be confirmed in hope of Gods goodnesse to our selues at this time.

I. 21. box

Heb. 11. 1.

the

the Apostle speaketh) to subscribe vnto this doctrine by their owne experience, might not doubt, but that the Lord in due time wil hear vs as he hath done them. Yea if we can remember but our owne experience, and that that our selues haue made triall of through the goodnesse of God, how in former times he hath heard vs, when we haue by fasting and prayer thus publike-ly sought vnto him: as when the Inuincible (falsely so called) Spanish Nauie was vpon our coasts, how wonderfully vpon our earnest sute and supplications euery where made to that end, not onely wee were preserved from that horrible destruction which they most wickedly intended against vs, but that themselves were drowned in the sea, euen the horse and him that rode vpon him, as the Egyptians were when they came against the Israelites. And truly we may remember, what a sudden and great feare, all men for the most part were then stricken with, and not with-  
out

such more  
your owne  
experience  
times  
ist.

rod. 15.1.

our cause, and so how earnestly they did seeke vnto God, when as there was in all places much fasting and prayer, and the people came willingly to it: if we could do so now, when the Lord threatneth destruction to vs, and to all places, as he did then (though after another maner) wee might by our owne experience comfortable lift vp our heads, and looke with good assurance for the like mercy, that we found, for God is the same, if we be not changed: when as by former experience like as *Dauid* said, when he went against *Goliath* to fight with him, whose great stature, and complet armour of brasse, and weapons might iustly haue terrified him: The Lord that deliuered me out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Beare, he will deliuer mee out of the hand of this Philistim: so we might all say; The same God of mercy that hath heeretofore heard vs, when we haue in true humilitie sought vnto him, wee doubt not, when wee haue

1. Sam. 17.  
37.

The ordinā-  
ry prayers  
of the faith-  
full haue ob-  
tained great  
things, much  
more their  
fastings and  
prayer.

haue sufficiently profited by this affli-  
ction, will now heare vs also, and deli-  
uer vs. For indeed if we finde both in  
the Scripture, and by dayly experience  
in our selues and in other, that the ordi-  
nary prayers of Gods seruants, and  
namely of our selues, are not sent away  
emptie, but that the Lord doth dayly  
according to the same blesse vs and  
them: then these prayers which wee  
now make with fasting, which are  
more than ordinary, we may be assu-  
red shall bring great blessings vpon vs.  
When at the commandement of *He-  
rod*, *Peter* was kept in prison, earnest  
prayer was made of the Church vnto  
God for him, and when *Herod* would  
haue brought him out vnto the people,  
the same night slept *Peter* betweene  
two souldiers, bound with two chains,  
and the keeper before the doore kept  
the prison; and beholde the Angell of  
the Lord came vpon them, and a light  
shined in the house, and he smote *Pe-  
ter* on the side, and raised him vp, say-  
ing

2. 12. 5.

ing, Arise quickly; and his chaines fell from his hands, and so he was deliuered. If then the ordinarie prayer of the Church be of so great force, and doe so greatly preuaile with the Lord, as to frustrate the counsels of great Tyrants, to procure the helpe & presence of Angels from heauen, to open the prison doores, and to vnloosen fetters and chaines of iron: then what shall the extraordinarie prayers of the Church, euen their fastings and prayers do? Therefore we need not doubt, but if we cōtinue to profit in humility by this fatherly visitation of the Lord, and in repentance for all our sinnes, and in continuance and seruencie of praier; but we shall see some great fruit of them at the last, euen in that verie thing, that we most of all desire.

And that wee might yet be further comforted in this great heauinesse of ours with hope of some mercie from God, euen that he would spare vs at the last according to our earnest desire,



1. King. 21.  
21.

The Lord  
hath reward-  
ed the wic-  
ked, that  
haue vsed  
this ordi-  
nance but in  
outward ce-  
remonies.

fire, let vs remember how when King  
*Ahab* a wicked and verie vngodlie  
man fasted for that destruction, which  
the prophet *Elijah* had by the worde  
of the Lord threatned against him, e-  
uen that the Lord would bring euill  
vpon him, and take away al his posteri-  
tie, & make his house desolate like the  
house of *Ieroboam*, what great mercie  
he obtained of the Lord: Which fast  
of his, though it was not ioined with  
true repentance, or any true know-  
ledge, how to serue the Lord aright,  
neither could be (for he was an idola-  
tour) yet being performed in some  
sort, onely in keeping the outward ce-  
remonie, as putting on sackcloth, and  
abstaining from meat and drinke, and  
giuing some other outward token of  
sorrow and grieve, that that fast of his  
was not vnrewarded of the Lord. For  
by that meanes he obtained that the  
execution of that iudgement against  
himselfe and all his posteritie, which  
we haue heard of, concerning the ra-  
sing

sing of him and them from the kingdome and throne of Israel, was put off and differred vntill his sonnes daies : as it is saide in the wordes of that text, that when he had heard what the prophet had prophesied against him, hee rent his clothes, and put sackcloth vpon himselfe, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly in token of mourning : and the word of the Lord came to *Elijah the Theshbite*, saying, Seest thou how *Ahab* is humbled? because hee submitteth himselfe before me, I will not bring this euill in his daies, but in his sonnes daies I will bring euill vpon his house. If the Lord then did so iustify this ordinance of his in the person of this wicked man, when he did stoope but vnto the outward ceremonie and bodily exercise of it, and was altogether voide of true humilitie and sound repentance, resting onely in the bare outward tokens of them, and had not his heart thoroughly broken by faith : that hee

1. King 21.  
27.

M

differred

*As much more  
will he doe it  
to his ser-  
uants that  
use it in  
trueth.*

differred this deserued and denounced iudgement so long, that it came not in his daies, which was a great outward blessing and honour vpon him: how then much more if we so vse this outward abstinence as we doe, that especially we ioine to it the inward vertues of humilitie and repentance, and contrition of hart, and seruencie of praier, will the Lord be appeased towards vs, and at the least bee so farre foorth intreated, that hee differre that great wrath of his, that otherwise might breake out to our vtter destruction. For if the Lorde hath shewed such mercie to the wicked, as to spare them in this world for a time, whē they haue submitted themselves to the outward obedience of this commandement of humbling themselves in fasting, though in great hypocrisie: then howe much more will he spare his owne children, that vse it in sincerity and trueth? Therefore let this example also somewhat incourage vs with hope of good successe

cesse that wee shall finde the Lorde mercifull vnto vs in thus seeking vnto him in this time of our great need.

And wee haue great reason so to doe, if we doe but well weigh the dealing of one man towards another, that when in affliction they haue submitted themselues vnto them, they haue founde fauour with them, though they had greatly offended them before: the onelie hope of this hath mooued them to seeke after this maner euen to those, which were their professed enemies before, and they haue done it not in vaine. For thus it is written of *Benadad* king of *Aram*, that when he was ouercome in two battels of *Abab* king of *Israel*, and receaued so great an ouerthrow in the latter, that in it were slaine of the *Aramites*, an hundred thousand footemen in one daie, and so was out of hope of anie safetie for himselfe, at the length by the aduise of his seruants, he put his companie into sackcloth, with roapes

*By humble  
submissiō  
and prayer  
men haue  
found fauour  
with their  
enemies.*

*1. King. 20.  
29.*

about their heads, and so came to the king of *Israel*, and intreated for their liues, hoping by submitting theſelues vnto him after this maner to obtaine pardon, as indeed they did. For the meſſengers, when in this araie they came vnto him, ſaid, Thy ſeruant *Ben-hadad* ſaith, I praie thee let me liue, vſing all words and behauiour of great ſubmiſſion: and *Abab* answered, he is my brother, is he yet aliue? goe bring him to me: and when hee came, hee made a couenant with him, and let him goe. See what is the fruite of true humiliation, and humble ſupplication: and if men will humble themſelues and ſue earneſtly vnto men in hope of pardon, howe much more ſhould they doe it vnto the Lorde, whom they haue more offended, and who hath greater power to puniſh them: and if vnto thoſe of whom they had no promiſe before of obtaining any thing, but come to them altogether (as it were) at aduenture: then much more

1. King. 20.  
33.

Much more  
ſhall they doe  
it with the  
Lord their  
God.



more to him, of whom we haue so manie gracious promises in the Gospell to allure and encourage vs : and if vnto those, which were their open and professed aduersaries, then most of al vnto him that is reconciled vnto vs by the blood of his sonne, and is become our father in him : and if vnto them where we haue none to speake and intreat for vs but our selues, then especially to him, where we haue an aduocate and mediatur, euen Iesus Christ the right- 1.Ioh.2.2.  
teous, who is also the propitiation for our sinnes : and if vnto them, of whose loue we neuer made triall before, then vnto him much more, who (as he hath first shewed it aboue all measure in giuing his sonne to die for vs, and that when we were his enemies) hath since confirmed it vnto vs many waies, that we need not doubt of it. And on the other side if so great mercy hath beene thus found of men, who haue scarce one drop of that compassion in them, which is like a great deepe sea in the

Lord; then may we be assured that we shall not misse of it at his hands if we continue seeking, and waite vpon him for it, as we should : and if a man hath found it of his enemy, then much more of his God to whom he is reconciled : and if where none speake for him, but mortall men like themselues, then much more, where Iesus Christ the sonne of God maketh continual intercession for vs. So that euery waie we see we haue cause to doe as we do, hoping assuredlie, that we shall not doe it in vaine.

*A conclusion  
showing the  
necessitie of  
humbling  
our selues in  
fasting and  
praier.*

Therefore if the commandement of God did not compell vs to the obedience of this humble submission, as it doth ; yet the liberall and most certain promises which are made to them that shall vse it, and especially the experience that we and other haue found of the vndoubted trueth of them should prouoke vs to this holy exercise of fasting and praier : which if men will not come vnto so farre, as they be able, what

what remaineth for them? and what other thing can they looke for, but that if they will not humble themselves with the people of God to finde mercie, they shall taste of his wrath with the wicked: and if they wil not weepe now for their sinnes with the one, they should houle in the punishment of them, when it shall be too late, with the other: and if they wil haue no part nor portion in the obedience of Gods commandement giuen to his people, both vnder the Law and the Gospell, that they should haue part with them in the promises of reward made to them in them both. Euen as the Lord himselfe in plaine words hath threatened, that they that wil not afflict themselves with sorrow for their sinnes in fasting and mourning at times conuenient, he will destroy and roote them out from among his people, saying; This is a day of reconciliation, to Leu. 23. 29 make an attonement for you before the Lorde your God: and euery per-

son that humbleth not himselfe that  
same daie, shall euen be cut off from  
his people.

## HOMIL. VI.

*The sixth Homilie sheweth what is the pro-  
per time for fasting, namely, the time of  
affliction & sorow: and then how God  
requireth it, and his seruants haue pra-  
ctised it: and so how the Lord requi-  
reth it of vs in this time of our sorow:  
and how long the time of a fast should  
continue: and how the same time should  
be spent.*



Having shewed in the  
former Treatises (as you  
haue scene) that this ho-  
ly ordinance of fasting is  
grouded vpon the com-  
mandement of God, and that he strait-  
ly vpon our allegiance that wee owe  
vnto him requireth it of vs, and so it  
can not be left vndone of vs without a  
manifest disobedience and contempt  
of

of his Word : and moreouer, that the whole action consisteth both in that outwardbodily exercise of abstinence and forbearing of those things for a time, which we haue heard of : and also and especially in those inward vertues of the minde and graces of the spirit, to be then attained vnto, vsed, and professed, which haue lastly beene intreated of : and therefore is to be obserued of vs after that maner that hath beene declared, if we will haue our seruice therein acceptable vnto God, and profitable to our selues : it remaineth to shew, what is the time proper and peculiar vnto this exercise, and when the Lord especially requireth it of vs.

For it is not an ordinarie and common seruice of God, & that which shuld be practised euery day, as some others are, and so it is not fit for euery time : but

*Fasting is not an ordinary seruice of God fit for all times.*

an extraordinarie part of his worship, and of our dutie vnto him, and so more meet for some times than for other.

*Solomon* by the wisdom of Gods spirit  
saith



Eccle 3.1.

verf. 4.

Esa. 22. 12.

sayth in the booke of the Preacher (as we haue heard before) that there is to all things an appointed time, & a time to euerie purpose vnder the heauen: and so a time to weepe and a time to laugh, a time to mourne and a time to dance, and therefore a time to fast and a time to feast. So then, as it were a verie preposterous thing for any to make great feasts when they should fast, and in the times when the Lord by his word and works of iustice calleth to fasting, that then they should giue themselves to all kinde of cheering vp of themselves: which kinde of prophanesse the Prophet greatly complaineth of in his time, saying, And in that day did the Lord God of hostes call vnto weeping and mourning, and to baldnesse, and girding with sackcloth, and beholde ioy and gladnesse, slaying oxen and killing theepe, eating and drinking, and mocking the doctrine of the Prophet with these words, For to morrow we shall die: so on the other side,

it

it were a thing of very great disorder, <sup>we must be</sup>  
for any to afflict themselves & to fast, <sup>able to di-</sup>  
when God would haue them to re- <sup>scerne be-</sup>  
ioice and feast: as we see some of those <sup>tweene the</sup>  
that returned from the captiuitie of Ba- <sup>time of fa-</sup>  
*bylon*, of a good deuotion, but of great <sup>sting and of</sup>  
ignorance, and so were rebuked for it.  
For when in the feast of Tabernacles  
they did heare the Law of God read  
(whereof they had beene ignorant a  
great while) and thereby perceiued,  
how they had offended God, they  
wept for their sinnes, and began also to  
abstaine from their meat, as appeareth  
by the answer of *Efra* and the rest of  
the Leuites, who sayd vnto them, This <sup>Neh. 8.9.</sup>  
day is holy vnto the Lord your God,  
mourne not, neither weepe; but goe  
and eat of the fat, and drinke the sweet,  
and send part vnto them for whom  
none is prepared: for this day is holy  
vnto our Lord: be ye not sorie there-  
fore, for the ioy of the Lord is your  
strength. So that it is, as if they had  
sayd, This is a time of great ioy for our  
deli-

deliuerance, and other great benefits of God bestowed vpon vs, and therefore not of fasting. But this is the great blindnes and ignorance of many, that this way they know no difference of times, but all are alike to them, if they may haue meat.

*Psal. 119.  
105.*

*The time of  
affliction &  
sorrow is the  
most proper  
time of fa-  
sting.*

Heerein the Lord hath beene mercifull vnto vs, and hath directed vs aright by his worde, which as it is a light vnto our pathes, and a lanterne to our feete in all other things, so also in this: when he hath shewed vs both by expresse commandement, and also by the common practise of al the godlie in all ages, that the time of affliction is the most fit and conuenient time for fasting, and as it were most proper vnto it: when as we haue cause of sorrow, either for some great benefit, that we want, or others whom we loue in the Lord, or some iudgement of God present, as most like shortly to come vpon our selues, or vpon them: and as any of these be greater, so haue we more

more cause alwaies to fast, and God doth then require it of vs especially at that time. And this is that which our Sauour Christ sheweth in the Gospel, where, to this captious question of the Scribes and Pharesies, saying, Why doe the Disciples of *John* fast often and praie, and the Disciples of the Pharesies also? but thine eate and drinke, he made this answer: Can yee make the children of the wedding chamber to fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them: but the daies will come, euen when the Bridegroom shall be taken away frō them, and then shall they fast in those daies. Where he excuseth his Disciples for not fasting at that time, because the Bridegroom was with them as yet, and so by Christs presence it was a time of ioy vnto them; but ere it were long, he should be taken from them, and they should want him, and there should come some great trouble vpon them, which should cause them to  
mourne,

mourne, and in those daies they should fast. So hee sheweth the time of fasting for them to be, when there should bee cause of mourning, either for so great a losse, as his owne absence from them, or for some present affliction, that should befall them. So that at any time whether there is any great blessing wanting publicly in the Church or common-wealth, or privately to our selues, which might make vs to mourne: or any great affliction present or to be feared iustly, which might minister cause of griefe, then the Lord requireth fasting of vs. And looke to all the practise of the godly, and we shall finde, that when any such occasion of time hath befallen them, then they haue with care and conscience submitted themselves to this holie ordinance of God, with one consent, as that which was necessarily required of them at that verie time.

*As any such  
time hath  
befallen the  
godly, they  
haue vsed  
fasting.*

And first of all we see the truth of  
this



this in the example of the *Niniuites*,  
 who hearing the prophet *Iona* so Iona 3.4.  
 mightelie to thunder out against them  
 the iudgements of God for their sin,  
 euen the ruine and ouerthrow of the  
 whole great and excellent citie, and  
 that within so short a time, according  
 as it is saide; That hee began to en-  
 ter into the citie a daies iourney, and  
 he cried out, that is, with all earnest-  
 nesse of soule and bodie he preached,  
 Yet fortie daies and *Niniue* shall bee  
 ouerthrowne: when they heard this,  
 they fell into great sorrow and grieve,  
 (as there was cause) for the misery rea-  
 die to fall vpon them, whereupon the  
 king himselfe cometh from his throne,  
 and laieth aside all his princely robes,  
 as hauing no delight in them, and co-  
 uered himselfe with sackcloth, and  
 sate in ashes, in token of great heau-  
 nesse: and then hee proclaimed a fast  
 through out the whole citie, and all  
 the people submitted themselues vnto  
 it, for they beleued the Lords pro-  
 phet,

*As the Ni-  
 neuites when  
 they feared  
 their owne  
 destruction  
 threatned.*

phet, euen that their deserued destruction was so neere at hande, vnlesse they did speedily repent, and so put on sackcloth from the greatest of them, euen to the least of them: Thus in this time of great heauinesse they tooke vpon them this exercise of fasting, which in the prosperitie and wealth, and flourishing estate of the citie they knew not of, neither were acquainted with it before: but nowe they saw that the time it selfe did call them to another kinde of behauiour, and so they did practise it willingly.

The like may be saide of the people of the *Iewes* in the daies of Queene *Hester*, when *Haman*, for the malice he bare against *Mordecai*, sought the desolation of all them, and had diuershly plotted for it, that he obtained the kings Decree in writing against them for it; which for the more speedie executing of the same, was sent by postes into all prouinces of his kingdome, where the *Iewes* were, to roote  
out

out and to destroye them all in one daie; both yong and old, children and women: heereupon it came to passe, that not onely *Mordecai* himselfe, when he perceaued all that was done, he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and ashes, and went out into the middes of the citie, and cried with a great crie and bitter: but also in euerie prouince and place, whether the kings charge and his commission came, there was great sorrow among the *Jewes*, and weeping & mourning, and many laie in sackcloth and ashes. Now in this time of so great heauines & sorrow, as was not heard of before, by the aduise of *Hester* al the *Jewes* that were found in the chiefe citie *Sushan*, were commanded to assemble themselves together, and to fast and praie vnto God by the space of three daies and three nights, and she promised that herselfe, and her maides would doe the like: and *Mordecai* & the *Jewes* did according to this commandement.

Heft. 4. 1.

And all the *Jewes* when they mourned for the deuise of *Haman*.

vers. 16.

N

So

So all of them at this time seeing what  
 cause they had of mourning more then  
 before, knew that nowe fasting and  
 praier was most requisite for them: for  
 though *Haman* and the king sat drink-  
 ing, and making merie, as fearing no-  
 thing; yet the citie of *Shushan* was in  
 perplexitie, and so had cause to doe,  
 as they did. So did the *Iewes* also in *Je-  
 rusalem* and all *Judah*, in the like case  
 in the raigne of *Iehoshaphat*, when a  
 great armie of the *Ammonites*, & *Mo-  
 abites* came vp against him, they fea-  
 red greatly some ouerthrow, euen the  
 losse of their liues, and goods, and all  
 that they had, if the Lotde were not  
 mercifull to them to defend them: and  
 this feare of danger so neere at hande,  
 and so likely to come vpon them, cau-  
 sed great sorrow, for they confesse and  
 saie, there is no strength in vs to stand  
 before this great multitude, that com-  
 eth against vs, neither doe we knowe  
 what to doe: Then the king proclai-  
 med a fast throughout all *Judah*, and  
 they

1. Chro. 20.  
3.

And when  
 they were in  
 feare of for-  
 raie eni-  
 mies.

ver. 12.

they gathered themselves together, to aske counsell of the Lord, they came out of all the cities of *Judah* to inquire of the Lord. When they were in this distresse for feare of their enemies, that they knew not themselves what to doe, they humbled themselves before the Lord in fasting and praier, that he would shew them what they should do. And to be short in so large an argument, this is that which the prophet *Joel* sheweth the people that the Lord required of them. in that time of their miserie, that they were fallen into, & that the verie present sorrow, that they were iustly fallen into by reason of the hand of God lying so heauily vpon them, did require, and call vpon them for at that time: for when he had spoken of the great scarcitie, that was among them by reason of caterpillers, and other vermine, which had eaten vp, and destroyed the fruites of the earth, and so for this present affliction they had all cause to mourne, euen as



iel. 1. 5.

ver. 14.

*Mourning  
and fasting  
were joined  
together.*

hap. 2. 12.

he calleth all sortes vnto it, euen them that were most senselesse, saying, awake yee drunkards and weepe, and houle all yee drinkers of wine, and againe, Mourne like a virgine girded with sackcloth, for the husband of her youth, and againe, Girde your selues, and lament yee priestes, houle yee ministers of the altar: Thereupon he giueth them this charge, to sanctifie a fast, and to call a solemne assemblie, to gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the lande into the house of the Lorde, and crie vnto him. So he sheweth them that in this time of common sorrow they had all cause to seeke vnto the Lord in fasting and praier, and afterwards he sheweth more plainly, that at this time by reason of the common calamitie and griefe for it, the Lord did commaund them so to doe: in these words; Therefore now the Lord saith; Turne vnto me with all your hearts, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, where

where he ioineth these two together, fasting, weeping and mourning, and saith that the Lord doth require both of them, and the one should not bee seuered from the other; but seeing the Lord had giuen them so great cause of weeping and mourning, hee would haue them seeke vnto him for mercie by praier and fasting. Seeing then the Lord hath with his owne voice appointed out the time, namely that the time of mourning should be a time of fasting; and also holy men and women in the wisdome of Gods spirite haue so obserued the difference of times, that as there hath fallen out any great cause of sorrow in their time, so they haue put this in practise, as wee haue seene by manie examples: wee must thinke, that the same commandement bindeth vs to the like practise, when any such occasion of time shall befall vs, and that their practise must be our imitation.

This is, and hath beene a long time,

that cause  
common  
from we  
are in our  
me.

of great sorrow vnto vs, if we did right-  
ly consider of things, as we should : for  
if there had beene nothing else, but the  
losse of so gracious, vertuous, & peace-  
able a Queene, of whose religious,  
wise, & peaceable gouernmēt we haue  
had experience these 45. yeeres, that  
one thing might haue put sufficient  
sorrow into vs, to cause vs to haue  
humbled our selues before God in fa-  
sting and praier for our great vnthank-  
fulnesse, and other sinnes, which were  
the cause of it : But when vnto that  
losse which yet it hath pleased the  
Lord most mercifully to supplie, by  
causing our soueraigne Lorde King  
*James* so quietly to possesse his heri-  
tance of this crowne, whose royall per-  
son, and noble progenie the Lord pre-  
serue and blesse for euer ) when vnto  
this losse ( I say ) there hath beene ad-  
ded presently vpon the necke of it, so  
great a plague and pestilence, as wee  
haue not knowen, nor hath beene  
heard of in the daies of our forefa-  
thers,

thers, that it should continue so long, and in that extremity that it hath done, as to die weekly so many thousandes in this lande, and thus from weeke to weeke; and the same not onely to be in one chiefe and mother citie of this realme, but also in al other almost of account, and in townes corporate, yea in the sea-coast townes also exceeding much, so that many houses in them are left empty and desolate without inhabitant: and it is also in many villages, and small townes: so that it is dispersed almost all the land ouer, especially in these southerne parts, and scarcely anie shiere or countrey is free from it: Such a thing as almost hath not beene heard of among vs: So that wee say of it, as the prophet *Ioel* speaketh of that great affliction, that was in his time: who to mooue them to a most serious and deepe consideration of that hande of God, that was then verie heauily vpon them, saith on this wise: Heare, *Ioel. 1. 3.*

*Especially  
respect of  
this great  
and long co-  
tinued pesti-  
lence.*

O yee Elders, and harken all yee inhabitants of the lande, whether such a thing hath beene in your daies, or in the daies of your fathers; tell your children of it, and let your children shew it to their children, and their children to another generation: and then he doth at large describe the calamitie that was vpon them: but before hand hee telleth them, as wee haue heard, that it was such a strange thing, as neither themselves nor their fathers had seene, nor their posteritie should after them, but the memorie of it was to be kept from age to age, euen to all posteritie.

So we may say of this mortall pestilence, and pestilent mortalitie, that the like was neuer in our dayes, nor in the dayes of our fathers, the oldest man or woman that liueth can not of their owne knowledge make relation of the like: so that we haue great cause neuer to forget it, but to keepe the memorie of it with profit to our selues: and also  
to



to tell it to our children & to our childrens children, that they may thinke of it also, & wisely to apply it to themselves, and so to profit by our harmes: that we all the sonnes and daughters of faithfull *Abraham* may do, as it is sayd of him, namely, Command our sonnes and our households after vs, that they keepe the way of the Lord, and doe righteousnesse, that God may not only keepe from them all his plagues, but bring vpon them all that good which hee hath promised to those that feare him. Seeing then that the hand of the Lord is more heauie vpon vs, and vpon our brethren this way, then euer we or our fathers haue felt or knowen it, we must needs confesse, that vnlesse we be senselesse and hard-hearted, we haue great cause to sorrow, and to mourne, and so to know the day of our visitation; & so to acknowledge this to be the very time, that God requireth of vs fasting and prayer, and all kinde of humiliation, that possibly can be. So that

Gen. 18. 19

*And so, he  
iust cause  
there is of  
publike fa-  
sting and  
prayer.*

if

if euer we should do it, now we ought;  
and if there be any time fit for it; this  
time of so great and so long affliction,  
and so consequently of so great sorrow,  
weeping and mourning, is most fit for  
it. Therefore if now we should neglect  
it, and spend away the time in feasting  
& in all kinde of mirth and iollitie (as it  
is to be feared, that too many do) euen  
as the wicked in former times haue  
done, there would be more than too  
great likelihood, that not onely this  
plague should continue and increase,  
but some more grieuous punishment  
should come vpon vs heereafter: and  
all of vs must needs haue iust cause to  
feare it. In the time of the law, they  
were not onely commanded to cele-  
brate the Passeouer yeerely, but to  
keepe it at the time that God had ap-  
pointed, and this he required so strait-  
ly, that if any had no let and imped-  
iment (as if he should be cleare, and not  
in a iourney) and yet should be negli-  
gent to keepe the Passeouer, the same  
parson

Esa. 32. 12.

Leuit. 9. 13.

6. *110 M. 6. of 100 pages. 1115 207*  
parson should be cut off from his people : because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his due season, that man should beare his sinne : if we then do not at this time , when God requireth it of vs , bring to him the obedience of fasting and praier, and offer vnto him in all humilitie (as the time requireth) the sacrifices of broken hearts, and contrite spirits, we can not onely not looke for any mercy according to our great need, but we may assure our selues of some further great punishment, if wee be not wholly destroyed, and cut off from his people. Therefore let vs not be like vnto those foolish Iewes, who knew not , nor regarded the time of their visitation , and so did not consider, either what mercie God offered vnto them , or what duties he required of them in that time ; of whō our Sauour Christ iustly complaineth in the Gospell , and vttereth his complaint out of the abundance of his loue with many teares , saying , O if thou

hadst

Luk. 19. 42

hadst euen knowen at the least in this thy day those things that belong to thy peace, but now are they hidden from thine eyes. So wee should now be ignorant, what God requireth of vs at this time, and not do it.

Let vs then be perswaded vpon the former reasons, commandements, and examples, that howsoeuer God at other times giueth vs libertie, to feast, and to reioyce, and to vse his benefits not onely for necessity, but for delight, according to the fundrie causes of mirth (which by his blessings is bestowed vpon vs) he shall offer vnto vs: yet at this time, it being a time of so great affliction, and so of sorrow euerie where, as hath not bene knowne or heard of, which they doe best know that we beene vnder the hande of God, and we our selues cannot altogether be ignorant of it; let vs bee perswaded I say, that the Lord requireth of vs fasting, and mourning, and great humiliation, that so we may doe that that

that we doe in faith, and in obedience to his holy commandement, and that most willingly also, that he might accept it at our handes and reward vs for it.

And heere againe by the waie we may easily iudge of the fastes held in the time of poperie and ignorance, namely that they were according to the blindnesse of that time both ignorantly imposed vpon mens consciences, and also verie superstitiously obeyed: when as they made no difference or choise of times, but without all discretion appointed the time of Lent, and all Ember weekes, (as they call them) and euery Saints euen yeerelie to be fasted; let the times be then as they will be: not considering whether the time be or shall be a time of ioy or sorrow, of weeping or of reioicing; as a time of peace or of warre, a time of sickness or of health, a time of dearth or of plentie, or generally a time of prosperitie or of aduersitie: & this they doe,

*In poperie this difference of time for fasting was wholly neglected.*



doe, not for euill pollicie (as we keepe them) but of meere conscience, inioyning all men vnder the paine of sinne, and fearefull curse of the Pope, vpon such and such daies, yeerely to fast, euen vnto their dying daie; when as it may fall out, for ought that they know, that such times may be full of causes of reioicing publikely or priuately, & so feasting were more fit for them then fasting. Euen as a Physitian shoulde prescribe vnto his patient, & that yere-ly vpon such a day of the moneth, or weeke hee should take such a purgation; when as it may fall out, that then hee is in consumption, and so had more need of some cordiall electuary, or restorative medicine, than of anie purgations: and if any should so vnadvisedly prescribe, we woulde count him a foole rather then a Physitian. But as he that is skilfull in his arte, and conscionable toward his patient, will minister nothing vnto him, either for purging or blood-letting, but he will  
con-

consider not onely the state of his bodie at that present, but also the time and season of the yeere, whether it be the spring or the fall of the leafe, winter or sommer, whether it bee hot or colde, or temperate, and accordinglie he will giue his direction: So the gouernours of the Church, (who in this respect may bee called the spirituall Physicians of our soules) in prescribing of this abstinence, and diet as it were, for the curing of our soules, that is, for the bringing of vs to humility and repentance for our sinnes, must haue principall regard to the time, and to the qualitie of the time: as whether it be a time of sorrow or of ioy, that so they may know, which is the fittest season for it: which we haue heard to be the time of affliction: and then it must not onely be in wisdom prescribed of them, but also diligentlie vsed of the people, if they will recover the health of their soules; euen as Physicke must not onely be prescribed

*But we must  
haue a care  
diligently to  
obserue it.*

of

112 192 *the holy exercise* 110.8.  
of the wise Physitian in time convenient, but the patient in taking of it must not neglect the time appointed by him. So that in this holie exercise, as in all other things the godly wise, and they that looke to get any good by it, must regard what is the time, that God hath appointed them to vse it: And heerein they must learne wisdom of the children of this worlde, who obserue the times for haruest and for seed, and know what is fit for euery time: so they must know what is the time for euerie dutie, and accordinglie practise the same.

But to proceed in this doctrine of fasting, as we haue hitherto seene the time when this holie exercise ought to be vndertaken of all Christians, euen the time of sorrow for the want of some benefit, or presence or feare of some punishment; so now we are farther to consider in few wordes, howe long it should continue; that is, when we see that we haue cause to fast, and  
minde

minde to doe it, how long the time of  
 our fast should last: And for this one *The time*  
 point I doe generally answere thus *a fast must*  
 much, that it must be alwaies accor- *be longer or*  
 ding to the greatnesse of our afflicti- *shorter ac-*  
 on, or according to the need, that we *cording to*  
 haue to be humbled more or lesse, and *the great-*  
 so sometimes it ought to be longer, and *nesse of the*  
 sometimes shorter, according to the *cause,*  
 discret wisdome of those to whom it  
 belongeth to appoint the same: this  
 alwaies prouided, that when it is the  
 shortest, wee must continew it at the  
 least for one whole day: that is from  
 euening to the next day at the same  
 time. In which time we must wholly  
 abstaine from any breakefast in the  
 morning, or dinner at noone, & from  
 the morning at the least to the euening  
 they must giue themselves to all good  
 exercises of the word and praier, sing-  
 ing of Psalmes, meditating vpon their  
 sinnes, and vpon the present affliction *And it must*  
 and such like: publikely and priuately. *be alwaies*  
 And thus is the time of fasting limi- *held one daie*  
*at the least.*

eu. 23. 27.

ver. 32.

An excep-  
tion.

ted vnto vs, in the worde of God: for *Moses* speaking of that yeerely day of fasting, which was prescribed vnto the Iewes, calleth it a day of reconciliati-  
 on, saying, the tenth of the seuenth month shall be a day of reconciliati-  
 on: so that it was not a worke of an  
 houre or two: but of an whole daie:  
 and oftentimes in the same place hee  
 speaketh of a daie, and not of a peece  
 of a daie, and further addeth, that they  
 should keepe it from eeuē to eeuē,  
 saying, This shall be vnto you a Sab-  
 bath of rest, and yee shall humble your  
 soules: in the ninth daie of the month  
 at eeuē, from eeuē to eeuē shall  
 yee celebrate your Sabbath: to shew  
 that it ought to be a naturall day con-  
 sisting of fower and twentie houres.  
 And when we thus straightly require  
 an whole daie, it is to be vnderstoode  
 with that limitation, that wee haue  
 heard of before, wherein liberty hath  
 beene granted for eating and drinking  
 some thing for all those persons,  
 which



which through age or infirmitie, or some sicknesse, are not able to continue fasting so long. So that as the Sabbath is an whole day, and must so be kept, (for it is called the seventh daie) and in the creation and so since, it consisted of euening and morning, that is, of day and night, as well as any other: so is the time of fast; this is the least time for any ordinarily: in some cases some are excepted, as hath beene saide, and they may somewhat abridge of this time, but yet the generall rule is for a daie. For the daie of fast is of the nature of the Sabbath, and it is also so called, and hath that name giuen vnto it, as in the forenamed place of *Leuiticus*, in the ninth day of the month yee shall celebrate your Sabbath from euening to euening: where hee speaketh not of the seventh daie (commonly called the Sabbath) but of the yeerely daie of fasting, called the day of reconciliation.

Exod. 20.

Leu. 23. 35

Wherein againe most euidentlie

the popish  
fasts were  
not for a  
piece of the  
day.

peareth the foolishnesse of popish fastes, who did limite them not to a daie, but to a peece of a daie, and vnto the least part of the day, as namelie to supper: so that they held it a very good fast, if a man went to bedde supperlesse vpon their fasting daies: inso- much that if hee tooke a good breake- fast, and dined well with all kinde of fish, & other dainties, (flesh onelie ex- cepted) & then whē their bellies were well filled tooke no supper, they were counted well to haue kept their fast. But we see that it must not be a fasting night, (as they commonly called it) but a fasting daie: euen an whole day, vntill euening. Therefore if wee will keepe it aright, we must abstaine, not a peece of a day, as in the forenoone onely, but vntill euening, and so the whole daie. And this must be ordina- rie for all fastes.

But if the affliction be greater, and the wrath of God appeere to be more seuerer, and so we haue greater cause of deeper

deeper humiliation, then the fast must  
 continue longer : as sometimes two  
 daies, or three daies, at the discretion  
 of those that haue such cause to vse it.  
 And this appeareth by the fast of the  
 Iewes, which they kept in the time of  
 their captiuitie, of whom it is saide in  
 the booke of *Hester*, that when *Mor-*  
*decay* sent vnto her the copie of the  
 Kings commission sealed with his own  
 signet for the rooting out of all the  
 Iewes in one daie, so that it was de-  
 creed that the whole Church of God  
 should bee rased out from the face of  
 the earth at once : then she promised  
 that she would adventure her life for  
 them, and goe into the King to make  
 suite for them, and that she and they  
 might finde fauour with the Lord and  
 with the King, she willed them all to  
 fast and praye three daies and three  
 nights, and neither eate nor drinke;  
 and she promised that her selfe, and  
 her maides would doe the like, and it  
 is said moreouer in the text, that *Mor-*

Sometimes  
 fast must  
 continue 2  
 or three  
 daies toge-  
 ther.

Hest. 4. 16

decay went his way, and hee, and the  
Iewes did as they were commanded:  
So that in this great extremitie of  
theirs, they continued their fast for the  
space of manie daies together: and so  
ought we to doe, if the like affliction  
were vpon vs. But for this present  
though by the grace & mercy of God  
it be otherwise with vs, yet vndoub-  
tedly in respect of this visitatiō which  
is verie grievous, wee ought to conti-  
nue our fast one daie weekly, so long  
as it shall be continued vpon vs: and  
so though wee doe not keepe it manie  
daies together: yet we may and ought  
to doe it manie daies, one after an o-  
ther. For seeing that it is appointed  
for the time of affliction, and then one  
whole daie at the least is allotted for it,  
so long as this time of affliction shall  
continue, we should not be vnwilling  
weekly to bestow one day this waie,  
that so the Lord may bee intreated  
with vs at the last. And thus much  
for the time how long any fast should  
be

be held.

Now further we are to consider how we should bestow this time of fasting, and wherein we are to be occupied in the daie of fast. And for the better vnderstanding of that, wee must knowe thus much, that the time of fasting, how long soeuer, whether it bee but one daie, or more, is alwaies of the nature of the Sabbath: therfore looke how we ought to bestow the Sabbath in resting from the ordinarie labors, and workes of our callings, and from all kinde of recreations and pastimes much more, and come to the Church, and be occupied in Gods seruice, publicly and priuately, so ought we to do vpon the day of fasting. And that we might be assured heereof, first we doe read, that this day as it is of that nature, so it hath that name giuen vnto it, for it is called a Sabbath: This shal

*The time of fasting is alwaies of the nature of the Sabbath.*

*Leu. 23.23*



ceuen yee shall celebrate your Sabbath: where twise in one verse *Moses* calleth it a Sabbath. Secondlie it is called a Sabbath of rest, and they are willed to rest their Sabbath, to shewe that vpon that daie, (as vpon the ordinarie Sabbath day) they should rest from the labours of their calling: and more particularly they are forbidden to doe anie kinde of worke vpon that daie: as it is saide, Yee shall doe no worke that same daie, for it is a day of reconciliation, to make attonement for you before the Lorde your God. And this euerie person is forbidden, & that vnder the punishment of Gods high displeasure to bee poured vpon them to their vtter destruction, as it is set downe in the next verse following; and euerie person that shall doe anie worke, that same day, the same person wil be destroy from among his people. Therefore vpon this day all men should carefully giue ouer all ordinary workes of their calling, and haue nothing

Leu. 23.28.

And there-  
fore then we  
ought to rest  
from the  
ordinaire  
works of our  
calling.

thing to doe with them, and not onely from their hands, but their mindes from them, according to the same strictnesse that they are bounde vnto vpon the Sabbath daie. Inso much that if there bee occasion to keepe a fast in the time of haruest, or seed-time, or any other time of businesse, so manie as doe professe to keepe it, must altogether abstaine from all such workes, as were otherwise not onely lawfull, but necessarie. Which that we might the rather most willingly yeeld vnto, wee acknowledge and teach, that in this daie of rest, there is that liberty granted vnto vs, both for the preparing of meat and drinke at the euening, yea and at othertimes also of the daie, if it be necessarie (as for those that bee weake and sickely) and for all other workes of necessitie, as anie occasion shall be offred, that we haue vpon the Sabbath daies. As for example, if any be sicke, it is lawfull to take paines about them, yea to ride & go for them.

*Workes of  
necessitie are  
then permitted.*

if any sudden casualtie fall out by fire or water, or theeeues, or such like, it is lawfull to take all paines to repressse the rage and furie of them. But setting all such cases of necessitie aside, all men ought wholly vpon these daies to rest from their labours; which the Lorde hath straightly forbidden, with the denunciation of a fearefull curse, that he will assuredly bring vpon al those that breake it, euen that he will cut them off from his people.

And besides this resting from worke (which is necessarily required) wee ought to bestow the whole day in the publicke and priuate exercises of the worship and seruice of God; as in hearing the Word of God read and preached, confessing our sinnes, and praying vnto the Lord; and in all other meanes that might further vs thereunto: and most of all which may quicken vs vp vnto true humilitie, and seruency in prayer. And therefore the Prophet

*We must be-  
low that  
day wholly  
in the ser-  
uice of  
God.*

Joel 1. 15.

*Joel* thus speaketh of it, exhorting them

to

to keepe a solemne day of fast, sayeth, Sanctifie a fast, call a solemne assembly: he doth not will them to appoint a day of fasting, but to sanctifie it, and keepe it holy; to shew that it ought to be kept euen as an holy Sabbath. So that as the setuenth day was sayd to be sanctified from the beginning, because it was not appointed for the works of our calling, but for the worship of God, and we are willed to remember it, to keepe it holy: so we should thinke of this day of fast, as of an holy day, and so remember it, and thinke of it before hand, that we take order for, and so dispose of all our worldly businesse and affaires, that that day we haue nothing to hinder vs from bestowing it wholly vpon the worship and seruice of God. So likewise *Moses* speaking of the day of fast, sayth, It shalbe an holy conuocation vnto you, and you shal humble your soules, and offer sacrifices made by fire vnto the Lord: where he doeth not onely say, that their assem-  
blices

Exod. 10.

Leu. 23. 27.

blies then should be to an holy end, as vpon the Sabbath, and that they should not meet about worldly matters, but speaketh of sacrifices, as a part of Gods worship then to be vsed. Therefore concerning the seruice of God this day to be vsed; as vpon the Sabbath day, besides the dayly morning and euening sacrifice, there was a peculiar kinde of sacrifice appointed for that day, namely, two lambes of a yeere olde, &c. and so all things were then doubled, and thus they spent the greatest part of the day in the publicke seruice of God: so ought it to bee vpon the day of fast. And this was the practise of the people of God, as we reade in the booke of *Nehemiah*, where it is sayd, That all the Israelites assembled, with fasting, and with sackecloth, and earth vpon them; & the Levites stood vp in their place and read in the booke of the law of the Lord their God foure times on the day, and they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God foure

Num. 28. 9.

Neh. 9. 1.

Therefore  
longer time  
then ordi-  
nary should  
be spent in  
the publike  
assemblies.



four times. So that both for the exercise of the word, and for prayer all was extraordinarie: and so ought it to bee among vs, that we should not onely do as we do, namely, twise a day, once in the forenoone and againe in the afternoone, but wee should continue both the times longer than we do, and haue more exercises of the Word, and of prayer, if wee were able, or had more helpe: as it is sayd in this Congregation of the Iewes they had: for the Leuites are reckoned vp by name, who spake, euen *Ieshua*, and *Bani*, *Kadmiel*, *Shebaniah*, *Bunni*, *Sheremiah*, *Bani*, & *Chenani*. who cried with a loud voice vnto the Lord their God: and they stood vp, and said, Praise the Lord your God for euer and euer; and let them praise thy glorious name, O God, which excelleth aboue al thanksgiuing & praise: where wee see that there were manie that prayed vnto God, and exhorted the people, which could not be all at once, because of disorder and confusi-

on

ver. 4. 5.

on, but one after another; whereby also it came to passe, that they were able to continue so long, euen to preach & to pray foure times in the day. And thus we see, how this day ought to be spent; therefore they that come to the Church in the forenoone, and absent themselves in the afternoone, without any necessarie cause to be approued of God and men, do not keepe this holie day of fast, as they should.

*In the popish  
fasting dayes  
worke was  
ordinarily  
permitted.*

And here againe we haue iust cause to finde fault with the popish pretended fastes, who as in manie other things they swarued from the word of God, so in this one point they came nothing neere it: for vpon their fasting daies there was no restraint of worke, but it was lawfull for them to followe their businesse, as vpon any other day, & they that professed to keepe it most deuoutly, yet did not leaue their businesse vntill noone, and then not wholly neither, for besides dressing vp of houses, preparing of linen against the

next

next daie, if they had any worke of their owne to doe at home within the doores, they thought that they might lawfully doe it, though it held them occupied vntill night: so they made no conscience of not working. And besides this, they had no speciall seruice vpon such daies, and if they had, few or none came to it, and held themselves bound to it: but the Churches were as empty vpon those daies, as vpon any other: and they that were most superstitious in that religion were of opinion, that if they came for a quarter or halfe an houre in the evening, they had done as much as could be required of them, though they vnderstood not one word of that that was said or done: so far were they from hauing any holy assemblies, or doubling of their seruice that day, that they had none at al for the most part: but all was differred vntill the day following; as though they should fast vpon one day, and serue God vpon another, and not doe

*And the seruice of God was little regarded.*

doe them both together. And thus much of the time, when, and howe long we should fast, and how the same time ought to be spent.

### HOMIL. VII.

*The seventh Homilie intreateth of the severall kindes or sorts of fasts, whereof the one is private, and the other publique: and first of private fastings, and how to behave our selves in them: and how they ought to be intertaineed in mans houses: and for what causes; and what great good may come thereby: and what liberty the Governours have in appointing of them aboue all the rest of the familie.*



He nature and condition of this holie exercise of fasting being thus hitherto described out of the worde of God, both that it is an ordinance and commandement of almighty God, and not an humane

humane constitution, and brought in by the policie of men, and therefore that which all men must submit themselves vnto of conscience: and also that it consisteth in that outward bodilie exercise of abstinence from all the comfort of this life for a time, and in those inward vertues of the minde, as true humilitie, and seruencie of praier, (whereof we haue heard) and that the time fit for it is specially the time of some great affliction, and that then it must bee held longer or shorter time according to the greatnes of the same affliction, whether it bee present, or iustly to be feared; & that the said time of fasting is of the nature of the Sabbath, and therefore must be so spent of all, as vsually the Sabbath is, & ought to be, both in abstaining from all the workes of our callings (things of necessitie onely excepted) and also in being occupied in the seuerall parts of Gods worship, as the exercises of the reading, and hearing of the worde of



*The feuerall  
kindes of  
fastes.*

God, praier vnto him, and all meditation and good conference that might further them thereunto : It remaineth now that I shoulde in order speake of their feuerall sorts and kindes of fasting, that we might know, how many they be, and what they are ; that so we might vse them in their feuerall time and place , as the Lorde shall require them of vs , and as we shall see that wee haue cause so doe : and that when we can not vse the one , as there is no cause for it at all , yet wee might perceauē that there was cause of the other , and so thinke our selues bounde vnto it, and that we should not thinke our selues wholly discharged of our obedience vnto the Lord this way, because wee can not serue him in that kinde of fasting that our selues doe desire. All fastes therefore are of two sortes , they are either priuate or publike, either vsed of one person man or woman , or of some one familie and household , or of some fewe priuate persons

*The one priuate, the other publike.*

persons in one family, or out of diuers,  
 according to the seuerall neede that  
 they shall finde in themselues, or see to  
 be in other: or else vsed of an whole  
 Church & congregation publicly in  
 a towne, or of many Churches in the  
 same towne or citie, and so is com-  
 mon to them all: or of diuers Chur-  
 ches in a countrie, or realme accor-  
 ding to the affliction that is, or like to  
 be vpon a towne, citie, countrie, or  
 realme, and that not onely their own,  
 but some other, as their neighbour  
 townes, or countries, or generally a-  
 nie part of the Church of God, and so  
 are mooued to it, not onely in respect  
 of themselues, but of some others, in  
 loue, and desire to succour them. And  
 vnto both these kindes all that hath  
 beene hitherto saide of fasting doth  
 truely and properly appertaine, both  
 for the commandement of God bin-  
 ding them to it, and for the nature of  
 it, wherein it consisteth, ~~that~~ it should  
 be kept strictly after the maner that

hath beene saide, and for the time when, and how long it should be held, and how during that time we shoulde be occupied; and so it shall be sufficient once to haue set them downe generally, which must be practised of all that celebrate anie fast, either publike or priuate; & so it shall not be needful in handling of the seuerall kinds, to intreat of anie of the particularly againe.

*What a pri-  
ate fast is.*

That I might speake therefore orderly, I will first speake of a priuate fast: which is that that is vndertaken and held by some priuate person, man or woman, rich or poore, of what calling or degree soeuer, prince or people; or of a priuate familie, or some few in the same, or out of diuers households gathered together vpon their owne priuate motion; yet orderly and in the feare of God, according to anie calamitie, that shall be vpon them, or they shall haue iust cause to feare, or as they shall be touched and mooued in compassion more then other with the calamitie

calamitie of the Church or commonweale, wherein they liue, or with the miserie of some particular persons in the same, or of other Churches and the members thereof. And that there ought to be such priuate fastes, it is most apparant out of the Scripture: for as the Lord doth by threatning or sending publike calamities, call whole countries and nations to a publike fast, that when the cause is common to all, all might humble themselves for it, as we haue seene in the prophet *Ioel*, and as was practised among the *Ninivites*, and also among the Iewes in the time of *Queene Hester*, where because the punishment present, as of famine; or threatned, as vtter destruction of them all, was generall, therefore all were willed to fast, and all did so: So if there be any calamitie vpon any particular person, or priuate persons, they must thinke by the like proportion, that God calleth them vnto it, and that they stand bound to submit them-

*That there  
ought to be  
priuate fast*

*Ioel 2.  
Jonah 3.  
Hest. 4.*

selues to this ordinance, though others do not, neither haue they any such cause: or as the Lord shall giue them to see, and to feele more then other the afflictions of their brethren, and so are more willing as fellow members of the same bodie to mourne for them, then others, who through ignorance or hard heartednesse are not so well affected towards them. And of these priuate fastes doth our Sauour

Math. 6. 16. Christ speake in the Gospell: When yee fast, looke not sower as the hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces, that they might seeme vnto men to fast: Verily I saie vnto you, they haue their reward: but when thou fastest annoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou seeme not vnto men to fast, but vnto thy father, which is in secret, and thy father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly. Where hee condemneth the hypocrisie of those, who in their priuate fastes, when they came abroad would make great shew of

*How we  
ought to be-  
haue our  
selues in pri-  
uate fastes.*



of it, that they might be thought to be verie holie men; & to that end would so change by arte, the naturall colour and hue of their face, that they might seeme leane and without blood, as though they had greatly pined awaie themselves, with abstinence & fasting: and biddes them rather, seeing it is priuate, hide it, as much as they can, and to that end hee willeth them to looke cheerefully, & to dresse vp themselves well; for it is sufficient, that the Lord, who seeth all things, euen those that are done in secret, taketh knowledge of it, and he will reward them openly, though they haue no praise and commendation of men: as he had said before of almes: Let not thy left hande know, what thy right hand doth, that thine almes may be in secret, and thy father that seeth in secret will rewarde thee openly: where he doth not disallow of almes, but of their vaine ostentation in it, who this way sought the praise of great charity among the peo-  
 Math. 6. 3.

ple, and saith that is sufficient, that God knoweth it, who will openly rewarde euerie man according to his workes.

Sam. 12.

David kept a  
private fast,  
when he  
could lay  
the.

We haue a practise and example of this priuate kinde of fasting in the person of King *Dauid*: when the Lord had stricken the childe with sicknesse, that was begotten in adulterie of *Bathsheba* the wife of *Uriah*, because that was a particular punishment vpon himselfe, and hee did see the hand of God vpon himselfe very heauie in it, according to that which *Nathan* the Prophet had threatned against him before, (Because thou hast caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the childe that is borne vnto thee shall surely die) he humbled himselfe before the Lord alone by himselfe, and sought vnto him by fasting and prayer, that if it were possible according to his holy will he would spare him: and this he did alone by himselfe: for it is sayd, That he fasted, and went in, namely into

vers. 16.

into his priuate chamber, and withdrew himselfe from all company, that hee might be alone, and hee did lie all night vpon the earth : and when the Elders & chiefe men of his house came vnto him, to perswade him to rise from the ground, and to eat meat, he would not, neither did eat meat with them. So that the rest of his householde did take their ordinarie food, but he fasted: And thus it seemeth he did more than one day, during the sickenesse of the child : for when it was dead, they were afrayd to tell him of it, saying, while the child was aliue, we spake vnto him, and hee would not hearken vnto our voice, that is, he would not giue ouer fasting, though they earnestly intreated him. So that whiles the childe laye sicke hee continued his fasting and prayer vnto the Lorde for the life of it for the space of diuers daies, for it died not vntill the seuenth day after that it fell sicke. Which godly fast of his doth shew, that if any shal .  
haue

So did *Ahab*  
when Gods  
iudgement  
was denou-  
ced against  
him.

1. King. 21.  
20.

vers 27.

haue any affliction vpon them, and so the Lord giue them cause of sorrow, and of humiliation more than others, or which others haue not at all, no not they which are of the same familie, then they are for a time to put themselves apart as it were from the rest, and in priuate fasting and prayer to seeke vnto the Lord for mercie, more than others, as *Dauid* did heere. So is it sayd also of *Ahab* King of Israel, that when the Prophet *Elyah* had sharplie rebuked him for his sinnes, & denounced the curse of God against him and his whole familie for it, saying, Thou hast tolde thy selfe to worke wickednesse in the sight of the Lord; therefore Beholde, sayeth the Lord, I will bring euill vpon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and wil cut off from *Ahab* him that pisseth against the wall, as well him that is shut vp, as him that is left in Israel, and so forth, as it followeth in that place. When *Ahab* heard those wordes, hee rent his clothes,

clothes, and put on sackcloth vpon him, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. Thus because the wrath of the Lord appeared speciallie against him for his sinne, though he proclaimed no publike fast thorow his kingdome, yet he saw that it was high time for himselfe at the least to practise it. Therefore if any shall haue fallen into any grieuous sinne, as these two Kings had, whereby the Lord by the ministerie of his Word threateneth against them some notable punishment, and their owne consciences tell them, that they haue iustlie deserued it, or some grieuous thing is alreadie befallen them, then they must know it to be their bounden dutie to seeke, to turne away the wrath of the Lord from themselves, and from their houses, by priuate fasting and prayer; and they must not onely acknowledge, that the Lord requireth, that they should humble themselves before him in fasting, and so could be contented, that there were some

*So ought all  
other men  
and women  
doe in the  
like case.*



some publicke fasts then, whereunto they might resort, and thinke themselves discharged, because there bee none, and so tarie vntill some by publicke authoritie vpon some occasion be cōmanded; but because it is their own case onely, and none others, they must see what God requireth of them alone.

Reasons to  
persuade  
men to pri-  
uate fasting.

And truly if all men would thus do, they might preuent manie of Gods heauie iudgements, which otherwise befall themselves and theirs: but often times many sinnes are most grievously committed, and Gods holy law broken, not onely by some one in a familie, but by diuers, both gouernours, children, and seruants; as adulterie, fornication, and other vncleannesse, drunkennesse and gluttonie, swearing and blaspheming the most holy name of God, contempt of Gods word and sacraments, besides all ruffianlinesse and prophannesse, pride, oppression and such like, and they doe not seeke priuately to humble themselves before God

God for them, when they breake out, and are iustly by Gods Ministers reproved for them, but rather they go on obstinately, and stand in the defence of the same; they do not, I say, after some extraordinarie maner of fasting and prayer seeke feruently vnto the Lord, and so his iudgements breake out against them, and some plague or other entreth into their houses, which with their sinnes they haue defiled; that as the Cananites were spued out of that fruitfull land for their wickednesse, so are they by sicknesse and death cast out of their goodly houses. Which kinde of wickednes committed closely in houses, as it was the principall cause that this late plague first entred into them, so in that respect some had iust cause to begin sooner and to continue longer their priuate fast, then by publike authority all were inioyned vnto it. For if *Ahab* who was an idolater, & a wicked man did then see, that now he had cause to fast, though other did not; then

The good  
that might  
redound to  
private fa-  
milies there-  
by.

then we, that are taught by the Word of God, should much more discern of the times, and know, when in respect of our priuate finnes and calamities present, or iustly to be feared, we haue cause to fast and pray, though other do not. And if *Ahab* in thus doing did obtaine a release from this particular iudgement so farte forth, that it was put off, and came not vpon his house in his dayes, according to that that is said of him by the Lord himselfe vnto *Eli-iah*: Seest thou how *Ahab* is humbled before me? because he submitteth himselfe before me, I will not bring that euill in his dayes, but in his sonnes daies will I bring euill vpon his house. Then wee much more vsing this holy ordinance in sinceritie and trueth, might put far from vs, and from all ours, manie grievous plagues, which our finnes haue deserued. Therefore let vs bee perswaded, that it is our bounden dutie sometimes, not onely to giue our selues vnto priuate praier (which shuld  
be

be ordinarie and continuall) but euen to fasting and prayer. And this is that, which we reade of *Dauid* againe, when 2. Sam. 3.

*Abner* was traiterously slaine by *Joab* 30.

and *Abishai* his brother, because not only for the losse of so woorthie a captaine, but especially for that great sinne in murthering him, which might procure Gods wrath against himselfe and

his whole Realme; and that it might appeare, that hee was free from his blood, he not onely sorrowed greatly for his death, and prouoked the rest of the people thereunto (as it is sayd of him, Rent your clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourne before *Abner*: and King *Dauid* himselfe followed the beere, and when they had buried *Abner* in *Hebron*, the King lift vp his voice and wept besides the sepulchre of *Abner*, and all the people wept) but also *Dauid* the King did further humble himselfe by fasting that day, because he saw more into the hand of God, and was more touched with it: for it is

*Dauid fasted privately for the death of Abner.*

Written

ver. 35.

written of him, That all the people came to cause *Dauid* to eat meat, while it was yet day; but *Dauid* sware, saying, So God do to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else till the Sunne be downe: so that it is written of him, and of him alone, that in this common cause of heauinesse, hee not onely mourned with the rest, but fasted also, and praied vnto God (which is to be vnderstood, as a thing necessarily ioined vnto fasting, though not expressed) for this great sin, and for feare of Gods vengeance against it.

Dan. 9. 2.  
Daniel fasted privately in the time of the captiuitie.

Wee haue also a very cleere and pregnant example of priuate fasting, in the prophet *Daniel*, who when hee vnderstood by bookes the number of the yeeres, whereof the Lord had spoken vnto *Jeremiah* the prophet, that he would accomplish seuentie yeeres for the desolation of Ierusalem: and so perceaued that the time of their deliuerance was drawing on, he turned his face vnto the Lord his God, & sought by



by praier and 'supplications', with fasting and sackcloth, and after that the Lord according to his promise would now accomplish the same. The affliction of captiuitie was common, and so all ought to haue sought vnto God after this maner, as well as hee, as they did in the daies of *Hester*: and it may be that some other that feared God, did so then also in their seuerall families: but as we are vncerteine of that, though charitie bindeth vs to hope well of them, so wee are sure, that *Daniel* did priuately seeke vnto God in fasting and praier, both for himselfe, and for the people, because it is so written of him. Whereupon we inferre, that not onely when affliction is priuately vpon our selues, wee ought thus to seeke vnto the Lord, but when it is vpon our brethren, especially when it is vpon the church and common-welth, and we ought then priuately to doe it the rather, because we should be more touched with the common estate, then

Q

with

with our owne particular ; so that if in such cases there bee no order taken for publike fasting , then they that feare God , and know the day of their visitation , must thus priuately humble themselves before God , and mourne euery familie a part, yea & their wiues apart, as the prophet speaketh. And so at this present in respect of that great mortalitie, that hath bene a long time

*Zac. 12. 12.*

*So ought the  
godly to do in  
the time of  
any common  
calamitie, as  
of this pesti-  
lence.*

in the chiefe places of this land, if there had beene no order taken for publike fasting ( as by the grace of God , and the Christian wisdom of our gouernour there is : ) yet it was the dutie of all good men and women, priuately to haue done it : and so must we heereafter doe in like cases : and I doubt not but some or other , yea many at this time, did thus before this godly and religious order publikely came foorth. For though we may not disorderly vndertake, and set vp publike fasts in our churches vpon our owne priuate motion, but must sue for , and expect the allowance

allowance & commandement of publicke authoritie; that all things might be done in the house of God honestly & by good order, according to the golden rule of the Apostle, or rather the spirit of God: yet if any do it priuate-<sup>1. Cor. 14. 40.</sup> lie, when there is cause, it shalbe both acceptable to God, and profitable to themselves and to others, and no offence vnto any. And for this also God will remember them, and shew mercie vnto them in such common calamities, as he shall bring vpon the people in their time: euen as the prophet *Ezekiel* doth promise to all those that mourned in Ierusalē, for the abominations of that time: of whom he thus speaketh, that the Lorde called to the mā clothed with linen, which had the writers inkehorne by his side, and said vnto him, goe through the middes of the citie, euen through the middes of Ierusalem, and set a marke vpon the foreheads of them that mourne, and cry for all the abominations, that bee

*And God will spare them, and blesse them for it.*

done in the middes thereof: and so to the other he said, that I might heare, goe yee after him through the citie, and finite, let your eie spare none, neither haue pittie: destroie vtterlie the old, and the yoong, and the maides and the children, and the women, but touch no man vpon whom is the marke, and begin at my Sanctuarie. Where we see, that they are marked out, and spared, that mourne for the finnes of their time; which must needs be vnderstoode principally of priuate mourning, vnto which in some one or other we may presume was ioined fasting. Therefore if when we see sinne abound in all sorts and degrees, (as it doth in our time too much) which threateneth some great iudgement vniuersally to come (as wee haue also felt and doe still by this present pestilence) (if the gouernors should be carelesse and negligent in their offices, and so there should be no order taken for publike fasting to turne awaie Gods wrath;

wrath; yet they that priuately sorrow,  
and mourne, and fast and praie, as they  
then ought, shall finde mercie at the  
hand of God, in the day of their visita-  
tion, as these in Ierusalem did.

But to returne to *Dauid*, (of whom 2. Cor. 11. 27.  
we beganne to speake before) as hee Dauid faste  
primately for  
the affliction  
of his eni-  
mies.  
was a verie godlie man, so hee did  
much frequent this holy exercise of  
fasting: that it may truely be saide of  
him, as it is of the Apostle *Paule*, hee  
was in fasting often. And these fa-  
stings he vsed not onely for himselfe,  
but for others; so louing and pittifull  
was he, and so full of compassion: and  
so touched with the grieue of others,  
that when they were in any great mi-  
serie (as sickenesie, or otherwise) and  
these not his friends so much, but his  
verie enemies, he besought the Lorde  
for them: as we read in the 35. Psalm.  
They rewarded me euill for good, to Psal. 35. 18  
haue spoiled my soule, but I, when  
they were sicke, I humbled my soule  
with fasting, and my praier was turg-  
ned



ned vpon my bosome : I behaued my  
selfe as to my friends, or as to my bro-  
ther, I humbled my selfe mourning, as  
one that bewailed his mother. Where  
he professeth, that though his enemies  
reioiced at his fall, and sought his hurt  
euerie way, yet hee was sorie for their  
affliction, and praied for them conti-  
nually, as though hee had caried his  
praier about with him in his bosome,  
and this hee did, humbling himselfe  
with fasting : according to the do-  
ctrine of the Apostle, which all of vs  
should practise. Reioice with them,  
that reioice, and weepe with them that  
weepe; bee of like affection one to-  
wards an other. And the like practise  
of his wee haue in an other Psalm, where  
hee saith, The zeale of thine  
house hath eaten mee, and the rebukes  
of them that rebuked thee, are fallen  
vpon me : I wept, and my soule fasted,  
but that was to my reproofe, I put on  
sackcloth also, & I became a prouerbe  
ynto them. Where hee sheweth that  
he

Rom. 12. 15

Psal. 69. 9.

And for the  
wickednesse  
of the un-  
godly.

hee was so greeued with the outragi-  
ous finnes of the wicked against God,  
as if they had beene against himselfe,  
and so gaue himselfe vnto fasting and  
praier vnto the Lord for them. And  
truely if we had that zeale in vs to the  
glorie of God, and loue to the saluati-  
on of our brethren, that wee should;  
wee might see, that besides this grie-  
uous plague that is and hath beene  
not onely vpon our enimies (if wee  
haue anie) but vpon our neighbours &  
friends, which requireth publike fa-  
sting; wee had many causes to haue  
done it priuately often & long before  
this, in respect of the horrible abomi-  
nations and finnes committed against  
God and against men euery where.

And that we might be mooued vn-  
to it indeed, we may further consider,  
that we haue not onely the example of  
men, but of godly women in this kind:  
who haue giuen themselues much vn-  
to priuate fasting. For we read in the  
Gospell of *Anna* the daughter of *Pha-*  
*nnell,*

Luk 2.37.

*Anna the  
propheteſſe  
used much  
priuate fa-  
ſting.*

*Anna*, who was a Prophetesse, and a widow of a great age, who went not out of the temple, but serued God with fasting and praier night and day. This holie woman liuing in those corrupt times a little before the comming of our Sauour Christ, when all things in the Church were out of order, did often humble her selfe before God in fasting and praier, and sought earnestly vnto God for a redresse of them, & she did not heerein loose her labour, but had the fruite of them; for it came to passe, that though she were a widow, and about foure-score and foure yeres, yet she liued to see Christ come in the flesh, to her vspeakeable comfort, and confessed him likewise, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Ierusalem to the comfort of many. Thus we see how we ought to haue fasted priuately oftentimes before: so might we happely haue escaped at the least some great things, that haue befallen vs, and obtained manie great

great blessings, which now wee haue wanted: and also we see, what we must doe heereafter, if wee will looke to escape many euils, and enioy manie blessings with the children of God, and that at this present we had neede to doe, as wee doe, euen to continue these publike fasts, that so wee might make a supply of that, which we shuld often priuately haue done before.

Thus also in the daies of *Queene Hester* the fast that was kept by all the *Iewes* in *Sushan*, for the turning awaie of that great mischiefe, that was intended against them by proud *Haman*, though it was cōmon in respect of the whole Church of God in that citie, that kept it: yet it was priuate in respect of the seuerall places where it was kept, namely not in any cōmon place of assemblie, but in their seuerall houses disperfed heere and there: so that *Hester* and her maides kept it by themselves, as she promised for herselfe, and for them, euen as the rest of the *Iewes*

*A priuate  
fast held  
in manie  
seuerall fa-  
milies at  
once.*

*Hest 4.16.*

the duties of  
householders  
herein.

Lev. 4 13.

Cor. 7.5.

Iewes were willed to doe it. So ought  
euerie godly housholder at the fore-  
sight of anie iudgement of God like to  
come vpon the Church, where they  
liue, in which if anie such thing should  
come, they must thinke, that they are  
like to haue their part, (as *Mordecai*  
saide; to *Hester*, Thinke not with thy  
selfe, that thou shalt escape in the kings  
house, more then all the Iewes) to  
seeke humblie vnto the Lorde, them-  
selues and theirs (so many as are capa-  
ble of it) by fasting and praier priuate-  
ly for the turning of it away, when  
there is no publike order taken for it,  
or likelihood that there shall be And  
this is that, which the Apostle hath  
respect vnto, when he thus writeth to  
the *Corinthians*, Defraud not one ano-  
ther, except it bee with consent for a  
time, that you may giue your selues to  
fasting and praier, and again come to-  
gether, that Satan tempt you not for  
your incontinenzie. Where hee spea-  
keth to the married parties, the house-  
band



band and the wife, and sheweth what duties they owe one to another, as Let the husband giue vnto the wife due beneuolence, and likewise also the wife vnto the husband: yet for fasting and praier they may and ought for that time & with both their consents separate themselves. So that there may be occasions in all times, for which the husband and the wife themselves alone, or with the rest of their familie, or with some other of their godly neighbors and friends may and ought to giue themselves privately to fasting and praier: and then the apostle sheweth, how the married coople should for a time in one dutie of theirs behaue themselves one toward an other.

And truely if wee had rightly considered of all things that haue fallen out in our time, and well weighed them, and laide them to hart, we might easily haue seene long agoe, that God had giuen vs iust occasion, to haue intertained this speciall part of his worship

*Private fasting ought to be intertained into mens houses.*

ship into our houses, as well as anie other, though hitherto it had little or no intertainment at all with the most, nay they haue not once so much as saluted it a farre off: And as by the grace of God wee haue in many houses, where the Gouvernours are anie thing religious, priuate praier morning and euening, and at other times, priuate reading of the Scriptures, priuate singing of Psalmes, so ought we also sometimes to haue priuate fasting. For whe the Lorde hath laide some grieuous sicknesse, euen vnto death vpon anie of our children, sonnes or daughters, (as he did vpon *Dauids*) then shoulde we haue with fasting & praier sought vnto the Lord for them, as hee did: much more then, when others haue beene in that case, who haue beene neerer vnto vs, as the husband or the wife, who lie in the bosome one of another, and are but one, euen in the neereft bond, as one flesh. But especially when God hath taken any of them

1. Sam. 12.  
15.

I  
For what  
causes, and  
what good  
might come  
thereby.

2

them away, and so hath come neerer  
 vnto vs with his correction, then had  
 we much more cause thus in fasting to  
 cast downe our selues at his feet in the  
 humble confession of our sinnes which  
 were the cause of it: as *Dauid* did when 2. Sam. 3.  
*Abner* was slaine: if he did so for one 35.  
 that was so farre off from him, and had  
 sometime also beene his enemy, then  
 we much more for those, that haue  
 beene neere vnto vs, and alwayes our  
 friends, as of our familie, and of our  
 flesh. And besides, when God hath  
 laid any speciall affliction vpon our ser- 3.  
 uants: for if *Dauid* did it for his ene- Psal. 35. 12.  
 mies, then wee much more for those, & 69. 9  
 whose seruice is not hurtfull, but pro-  
 fitable vnto vs: yea, when any great 4.  
 sinnes haue broken out in any of our  
 household, which haue threatned some  
 grieuous iudgement of God to enter  
 in vpon vs for it: or when wee haue  
 seene sinne openly abound in others.  
 And if all men had thus done, it might  
 not onely haue kept this great plague.

5.

out of many houses, but many other great punishments, wherewith (for want of it) they haue beene iustly afflicted. Yea we ought thus to haue done, when wee haue wanted some great blessing of God, or sought for some speciall thing at the hand of the Lord for our soules or bodies, for our selues or for our children; as in the matter of mariage, or some other weighty thing, that we haue had in hand, which hath greatly concerned vs or them, that we might be directed and blessed in the same: as the children of the captiuitie did when they returned home towards *Ierusalem*, for they proclaimed a fast, and humbled themselues before God, & sought of him a right way for themselves, and for their children, and for all their substance: and the Lord was intreated of them, for he gaue the good successe in their iourney, and deliuered them from their enemies. So we might doe it priuately, that the Lord might blesse vs in the waightie affaires of  
ours

Ezr. 8. 21.

ours, & keepe vs from all dangers that might otherwise befall vs.

For though we obtaine many things daily at the mercifull hands of our heavenly father by our ordinarie prayers publike and priuate : yet he hath made the largest promises of blessing vnto fasting and prayer, and greatest things haue been obtained that way of all the seruants of God. For as Christ sayd vnto his Disciples, to whom a certaine man brought his sonne possessed with a deuill, but they could not cast him out, and they demanded of their Master, why they could not doe it : This kinde is not cast out but by prayer and fasting : that is, a most seruient kinde of prayer, whereunto fasting is to be adioyned, to quicken vs vp thereunto : that it might be as it were a whetstone to sharpen our dull spirits, and to set an edge vpon our blunt hearts. So that wee may easily perceiue, that some things, yea many things that we stand in need of, are not obtained, or euils re-

mooued

Math. 17.  
14.

*Many things  
are not ob-  
tained with-  
out those  
prayers,  
whereunto  
fasting is  
adioyned.*



mooued, without this kinde of prayer whereunto fasting is adioyned. For as some things are not to be had without a great price, nor many futes obtained of great men without long and earnest supplication : so some things are not to bee receiued from God without those feruent prayers and supplications which can not be without fasting, nor without that hūble prostrating of our selues, which is wrought in vs by that meanes. And thus we are taught, that wee ought to haue vsed priuatelie this part of Gods seruice a great deale more than wee haue done; whereby we might haue brought into our houses more blessings, and haue kept out more afflictions, than now wee haue.

By reason of  
their great  
ignorance  
many are  
vnfit for  
private  
fasts.

But indeed the ignorance of the most part is so lamentable, that if they shuld not onely haue thus done before, but should now vpon the hearing of this doctrine heerafter determine for some good cause best knowen vnto themselves, to take this exercise vpon them, they

they know not how to behaue them-  
selues in it, or to performe it in anie  
measure so, as it might be acceptable  
vnto God, and comfortable to them-  
selues. So that it would fall out with  
them, as with those, of whom our Sa-  
uiour Christ speaketh in the Gospell, Luk. 5. 36.  
that they should not onely not be bet-  
tered thereby, but made worse: euen  
as if a piece of a new garment were put  
into an olde vesture, then the new ren-  
teth it, and the piece taken out of the  
new agreeth not with the olde: or as  
if new wine were put into olde vessels,  
the new wine would breake the ves-  
sels, and it would run out, and the ves-  
sels would perish. By which parables  
he teacheth vs, that fasting vnfitly vsed  
of them that are not meet for it, not  
onely maketh them worse, but vtterlie  
destroyeth them. Therefore better  
were it for such not to vse it at all, than  
by abusing it for want of skill, further  
to prouoke Gods wrath against them-  
selues; in which respect hee excuseth..

R

his

at in this  
ong and  
leere light  
f the Gospel  
gnorance  
xewseth  
one.

his Disciples for not vsing this priuate fasting as yet, though the Disciples of *John Baptist* did. But surely for vs, this long time and plentifull preaching of the Gospel so many yeres, might haue made all of vs fit enough for this holie exercise; so many as are of yeres of discretion: and so this grosse ignorance, and thereby wonderful vnfitness that is in men doth not excuse them, as it did the Disciples, who were but Nouices in his schoole, for hee had beene then but a little with them. Therefore wee see what God requireth of vs priuately as any occasion shall fall out, namely that wee should serue him not onely in other holy dueties, but in fasting and prayer: and therefore that we ought all of vs so to profit by the publike ministerie of the Word, while it is among vs, that we may be fit for it, when the Lord by his word, or by his worke shall call vs vnto it.

But to draw towards an end, it is further to bee obserued concerning these

these priuate fasts (that we now intreat of) that all sorts of men and women haue not power to appoint vnto themselves, what time they wil for this purpose, no though they euidently see, that they haue iust cause to vse it. For besides that the man and woman are so neerely vnited by the bond of marriage, as by the couenant of God, whereby it commeth to passe, that they are no more two, but one flesh, as Christ sayth in the Gospell, so that they can not separate themselves one from another, no not for a time, and to this end, without continuall consent (as wee haue seene a little before :) all they that are vnder the priuate gouernment of others, are at the disposition of their gouernours, by the law and commaundement of God : as sonnes and daughters, men seruants and maid seruants, scholars, all labourers and hired men for the time, and such like ; so that none of these can without the knowledge and free consent of those

Prou. 2. 17.  
Math. 19. 5.  
1. Cor. 7. 5.

None vnder  
gouernment  
can make  
choise of  
daies for  
priuate fasts  
without  
consent of  
their go-  
uerners.

vnder whom they are, make choise of what day in the weeke they wil, to obserue their priuate fasts in. For seeing the day of fast is to be kept holie, and being of the nature of the Sabbath, as hath beene prooued before, in it they must wholly rest from all the works of their ordinarie calling from euening to euening, and must spend that time in the worship of God; they can not at their owne will and pleasure giue ouer these workes, and so consequently not appoint vnto themselues a day of resting; but must be contented heerein to be ordered by the discretion of those, to whom they haue either by the bond of nature or by some couenant wholly addicted themselues and all their labours: and therefore they can not make choise of a day of priuate fasting (for of that we speake, and not of publike, wherein both master and seruant must be at the appointment of their gouernour) but so farre onely, as their superiours shall giue them leaue.

So



So that if they can not, or wil not spare their labours for a time, they are of necessitie to keepe all their priuate fasts vpon the Sabbath dayes, wherein they are bound to rest from their labours, and to serue God as well as any other : and so their masters and gouernours should not onely giue them leaue to doe, but also are charged by God so to doe ; and haue authoritie giuen ouer them to that end ; according to the expresse words of the commandement.

Sixe dayes shalt thou labour, and doe Exod. 20. 9.  
all thy worke, but the seuenth day it is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not doe any worke, thou nor thy sonne, nor thy daughter, thy man seruant, nor thy maide : where they are willed, not only not to hinder them from sanctifying of the day, but to looke diligentlie vnto them, that they doe religiously obserue and keepe it : and so vpon that day they may at any time (the times of necessitie being alwaies excepted) without any offence

to their gouernors (by defrauding the of their seruices) keepe their fasts. And so may they doe any day of the weeke els : if they haue their leaue ; otherwise not. For though this be a speciall part of Gods seruice, and that which he requireth of all at one time or other, yet because it is not ordinarie, and the fixe dayes are appointed for all the works of our seuerall callings ordinari- lie, and they are not their owne men (as we say) but at the disposition of others, euen of their gouernours ; there- fore he hath giuen the leaue to breake all such purposes of theirs, as shall vp- on any of these dayes hinder them from any of those workes or seruices, wherein they are to imploy them, and vse them. And so, as they may not vp- on these dayes leaue their worke, and go to a Sermon heere & there ; which some not ill minded might be willing to doe, and so leaue their masters busi- nesse vndone : and thus vnder the co- lour of deuotion and well meaning,

not

*If they doe,  
their gouer-  
nours haue  
power to  
breake them.*

not only idlenesse might be nourished in them, but many disorders brought into a familie: so, much lesse are they at their own pleasure to take vp whole dayes to themselves for fasting, without the priuie and good liking of those vnder whom they are: and if they should enterprise any such thing, they are by them to be reproofed and amended, according to the power that God hath giuen them.

And heerein as in some other things doth the law of God take place, that is set downe by *Moses*: If a woman vow Num. 30.4 a vow vnto the Lord, & binde herselfe by a bond, being in her fathers house in the time of her youth, and her father heare her vow and bond, wherewith she hath bound her selfe, and her father holde his peace concerning her; then all her vowes shall stand, & euery bond wherewith she hath bound her selfe, shall stand: but if her father disallow her the same day that he hereth all her vowes and bonds, wherewith she

1170 FROM 7  
hath bound her self, they shal not be of  
value, & the Lord will forgie her be-  
cause her father disallowed her. Where  
first he saith, That if any make a vow,  
or binde themselves with any bond to  
God or man, they must keepe it : but if  
a maid in her youth, and in her fathers  
house, that is, whiles shee is vnder his  
gouernment make a vowe, and when  
hee heareth it, by his silence or other-  
wise approoueth it, then it is in force,  
and must be performed : but if he dis-  
allow of it, then it shall be of no value,  
and God will pardon her, because her  
father hath broken it. So that they  
haue not power, while they be vnder  
gouernment, to vowe what they will,  
no not to God, as to fast, which is a  
voluntary seruice, and may be vowed;  
but if they haue done, the father may  
breake it. The equitie of this law gi-  
ueth the same authoritie to the father  
ouer his sonnes, and to the master and  
mistresse ouer their maid seruants and  
men seruants, & bindeth all them to be  
obedient

*Because this  
binde of ser-  
uice is but  
voluntary.*

obedient vnto the in such cases : especially whē as the Lord himselfe setteth  
downe the same law for the wife making a vowe without the knowledge  
and approbation of her husband, saying : If she haue an husband, when she  
voweth , or pronounceth ought with her lippes , wherewith she bindeth  
herselfe , if her husband heareth, and holdeth his peace concerning her the  
same day he heareth it, then the vowe shall stand, and her bonds wherewith  
she bindeth herselfe shall stande in effect : but if her husband disallow her  
the same day , that he heareth it, then shall hee make her vowe which she  
hath made , and that she hath pronounced with her lippes , wherewith  
she bound herselfe, of none effect, and the Lord will forgiue her : where wee  
see that the spirit of God vseth manie wordes, to giue vs to vnderstand, that  
though they haue determined neuer so certainly to do it , yet they by their  
absolute authoritie may hinder them. . .

And

vers. 7



And truly if it were not thus manie might, and would vnder this colour & pretence sometimes of fained holinesse defraud their parents and masters of their seruice, when they should most need them: but God is the God of order, and therefore hauing subiected children vnto their parents, and seruants vnto their masters, their persons and their willes, and hauing commanded them to be obedient vnto them in the Lord in all things, woulde haue them in all such matters, as are but voluntarie, to depend vpon their willes.

Col. 3. 20.  
22.

*In duties absolutely com-  
manded, the  
gouernours  
cannot re-  
straine their  
inferiours.*

I confesse that it is to be granted, that in things absolutely necessarie either for the glorie of God, a mans saluation, the preservation of life, the good of others, and such like: as to worship God purely, and to be of a sound religion, and to bee no heretike, papist, sectarie, or atheist; and to be of an holie life and conuersation, and not to be prophane like *Esaú*, or like the filthie sowe, that wallowerh in the mire; &

3. Pet. 2. 22.

generally

generally to keepe all Gods commandements, and to beleue all the articles of our faith: these things, I saie, they are to do, yea although they cannot haue their consent. For heere the wordes of the Apostles are in force; who when they were brought before the counsell of the high Priests and Elders, and there by them straightlie charged, that in no wise they should speake or teach in the name of Iesus: answered them and saide, whether it be right in the sight of God, to obey you, rather then God, iudge yee. So that *Peter* and *Iohn* when they were forbidden to preach, which Christ had necessarily inioined them by vertue of their office of Apostleship; and so in obeying them therein, they shuld haue disobeyed God: they answered, as you haue heard; and so did that, which God necessarily commaunded, thogh men forbad the. And this must be the practise of all inferiors, when they are forbidden any thing of their  
superiors,

Act. 4. 18.

superiours, which God hath commanded them in his worde, either as they be Christians, or otherwise; and heere is their defence, in so dooing.

*Inferiours  
may make  
choise of the  
Sabbath day  
for their pri  
uate fastes.*

But yet all these aboue-named degrees of persons, in their subiection though they be restrained from the choise of the day, yet are not therefore set free from the thing it selfe, I meane from the practise of priuate fasting, when they shall haue iust cause: for they may celebrate them vpon the Sabbath: in which their masters should giue them leaue to bee wholly the Lords seruants, and so not incumber them with anie seruice excepting things of necessitie, which are permitted euen in the day of fastes. And though there bee few vnder gouernement in families of that godlinesse and conscience, that they are like to practise these priuate fastes; yet neither am I out of hope of all, and I thought it necessarie to deliuer the doctrine; for it is their dutie thus to doe,

doe, though the greatest part be ignorant, or make no conscience of it. And so this shall suffice to haue beene spoken of the first kind of fast, which is priuate.

# HOMIL. VIII.

The eighth Homilie intreateth of the second kind of fasts, which are publike: & why so called: and how all sorts ought to come to them: and what a great fault it is for any to be absent: And then of the cause of them, which is the wrath of God against his Church: either presents, as it is now upon vs: or likely to come: which the godlie haue considered in the course of Gods providence, and so haue sought by fasting and prayer to preuent it, and not alwaies tarried till it came vpon them.



He second and last kind of fasting, which I am to intreat of at this time, is publike or common: and is so called, because

Publike  
fasts: and  
why they are  
so called.

I

it

it is and ought to be vsed not of a few,  
but a whole Church and congregati-  
on in a towne or citie, or of manie  
Churches in the same, or in a countrie  
or realme : and thus vsed by the pub-  
like authoritie and commandement of  
them, who (next vnto Christ Iesus)  
haue the gouernment of those places,  
where the fast is held, and not by the  
motion or aduise of some priuate man,  
as the other (that we spake of before)  
is. And therefore also these kindes of  
fastes are kept in the publike places  
openly, where they vse to haue their  
common assemblies for the worship  
of God (where the Church is consti-  
tuted vnder a Christian Prince) and  
not in any priuate house, or houses :  
And the cause of them is some general  
calamitie of the Church for the most  
part, and not priuate to one or some  
few : and that either in the same place,  
where the fast is sanctified, or in some  
other churches of their brethren, neer  
or farre of, for whom they seeke vn-

to



to the Lord according to the bond of Christian loue, that ought to bee among all the Churches of God, as among the members of one mysticall body, whereof Christ is the head: and the same calamity either presently vpon them, or imminent & greatly to be feared. So that briefly or in a word a publike fast is that, which is imposed by publike authoritie vpon all the people of that place, to be kept openlie in the common place of their holie assemblies, for some common plague to be remooued or turned away, or for the obtaining of some common benefit, belonging to the whole bodie of the same Church, or to some principal member of the same.

And such is this that we haue, and doe keepe this day by the authoritie first of the Kings most excellent Maiestie, and then of those that are in authoritie vnder him in Ecclesiasticall matters, and for the well ordering of all things to bee done in the Church :

*These which  
we now keepe  
are publike.*

vnto

1157  
Iona 3.7.

verf. 5.

vnto which all sorts of men and women should come in al cities & towns. Such was the fast that was celebrated in Niniue at the preaching of *Iona*: for the King caused it to be proclaimed through Niniue, euen through that great citie of three daies iourney, (by the counsell of the King and his nobles) saying, Let neither man nor beast taste any thing, feed or drinke water: and as the proclamation was thus generall, reaching vnto all, so it was accordingly put in practise, for it is saide a little before, the people of Niniue beleueed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them euen to the least of them: so that the fast was kept by all the people of that citie. The like may be saide of that, that was obserued in the daies of *Hester*, for though in respect of the places, where it was, as in their seuerall houses closely, it may be called priuate; yet in regard of the multitude that kept it, euen al the Iewes and people

ple of God in that citie, and in respect of the person by whose direction they were moued vnto it euen the Queene, *Hest. 4. 16.* it may truely be called publike; for it is sayd, that she sent this commandement to *Mordecai*, Goe and assemble al the Iewes, that are found in *Shushan*, and fast for me; and *Mordecai* went his way, and did according to all that *Hester* had commanded him: so this fast was imposed vpon all the Iewes, and all of them kept it. And so to the obseruation of these fastes of ours all *And therefore all sorts of people should come to them.* should come, not one or two in a familie, and say, goe you to daie, and we will come the next day: for by the authoritie and commandement of our gouernors all are inioined vnto it. And as vpon the Sabbath, because it is a daie appointed for the publike seruice of God, all are commanded to keepe it holie: Thou and thy sonne, and thy daughter, thy man seruant, and thy maide seruant, and the stranger that is within thy gates: So vpon these daies,

*Exod. 20. 10*

S

which

1187  
Esa. 2. 3.

*Reasons why  
all should  
come, and  
not a few  
onely.*

which are of the nature of the Sabbath, and are also publicly commanded, all should thinke themselves bound vnto it. Therefore as vpon the Sabbath day they should come together, and saie one to another, Come let vs goe vp to the house of the Lord: so vpon these daies of fasting one should call vpon another. Therefore not onely that is a great fault, if any should not come at all, but if any should come for nouelties, and then giue it ouer againe; yea and if they should come seldom now and then: or if they should come alone, and bring none, or verie few of their household with them. For besides that it is appointed by our gouernors, vnto whom all must yeeld obedience in the Lord, and they also haue power and authoritie ouer all alike: and seeing that the end of it is to turne away that wrath and displeasure of the Lord, which is iustly deserued of all; and as it is already vpon many, so it threatneth and terrifieth all, why should

should not all thinke theſelues bound,  
 to ſeek to haue it turned awaie? So  
 that no man muſt bee ſo ſimple, to  
 thinke it indifferent for them to keepe  
 it, or not to keepe it, and ſo make no  
 conſcience of it: but ſeeing it is com-  
 mon in reſpect of the commandement  
 of our gouernors, and in reſpect of the  
 cauſe of it, which is our finnes, all  
 ſhould thinke that they are tied in con-  
 ſcience to it: and ſo euery one ſhould  
 ſtirre vp themſelues to bee foreward,  
 and one call vpon an other, eſpecially  
 them of the ſame houſehold; that they  
 may come with their companies as  
*Dauid* did, who ſaith of himſelfe, that  
 he had gone with the multitude, and  
 lead them into the houſe of God, as a  
 multitude that keepeth a feaſt: So that  
 as men goe to feaſts not alone, but by  
 companies; and when a whole fami-  
 lie is inuited, they go altogether: ſo al-  
 ſo ſhould they goe to a faſt, wherein  
 publickly all of them are called vnto it.  
 Therefore as God threatneth deſtructi-

Pſal. 42. 4.



on not to some few, but to all vnlesse they repent: and all are commanded to seeke vnto him, to pacifie his wrath: so let al be willing to do it: especially seeing that we heere, and see, that when this iudgement of the pestilence entred into an house, it taketh awaie not one, or two only, but sometimes sweepeth away all.

*What a  
great fault  
it is, for any  
to absent  
themselves  
from these  
publike  
fasts.*

Therefore if we make conscience of the Sabbath daies, not onely to come our selues, but to bring all ours, because it is commanded by God vnto all: then ought we also to doe it vpon this day, which is to be kept as a Sabbath by the commandement of those who are in Gods stead vpon earth. So that they that absent themselves, besides that they neglect the meanes of pacifying Gods deserved wrath, and so in time it may iustly come vpon them, before they bee aware of it; they doe further prouoke his displeasure and indignation against themselves, in that they disobey so good, and holy, and necessarie

necessarie a commandement of God:  
Therefore vpon this day of fasting  
thus authorised vpon so good grounds  
for men to follow their ordinarie af-  
fares of the worlde, and not to come  
to the Church, and heere in this holy  
action to yeeld their obedience to god  
and man, is a greater sinne, then manie  
take it to be. Thinke of it therefore I  
pray you in the feare of God, and con-  
sider well, whether that the cause be-  
ing common vnto all, and the com-  
mandement being giuen out vnto all,  
and the time and place appointed for  
all, and the sound of the bell ringing in  
the eares of all, and the Minister of  
God ready to preach vnto, & praie for  
all: consider (I saie) whether in respect  
of these all should not come, and why  
one should be bound to it more then  
another, and one thinke that hee may  
bee spared more then another. To a  
common burning all should come to  
helpe to quench it, and one or two of  
an house is not sufficient, & we would

*As if they  
should refuse  
to helpe, to  
quench the  
fire burni  
in many  
houses.*

lustly blame them that in such a case  
would not leaue their ordinary worke,  
yea though they were verie poore, and  
liued of their labour, and come to the  
place and helpe. And shall wee not  
thinke, that all are bound much more  
to lay all things aside, and to come, &  
put to their helping hand, to quench  
this great fire of Gods wrath, which  
hath flamed out and burned a long  
time in manie towntes and cities, and  
in seuerall parts of the same? and like  
vnto fire, not onely consumeth where  
it commeth, and maketh the houses lie  
waste; but also goeth from place to  
place, speedily and without resistance,  
and so spreadeth further and further, so  
that manie men haue this burning fire  
of the pestilent feauer in their houses  
at once, not so much to the wasting of  
their houses and stufte; as to the burn-  
ing euen to death the very bodies of  
men, women, and children: and that  
with an exceeding great flame, that  
none almost dare come neere their  
houses,

houses, least they perish in the same. Surely if there were no commandment from men, the very loue to the liues of our brethren should compell vs to it, and nothing should keepe vs from it.

For what hardnesse of heart would we thinke to bee in them; who seeing their neighbours house on fire, and others come willingly to quench it, they would stande still gazing and looking on, or goe away about their businesse, and not regard it? especially if hee should be spoken vnto, and called vpon for helpe before. So nowe when this great and terrible fire of Gods indignation hath most fearefully beene a long time in the houses of our brethren, and is also come neerer vnto vs, euen to our neighbours, the houses or townes bordering vpon vs: when others do come hither with fasting and praier to intreat the Lorde for them, that hee would put out this great flame, who as hee alone hath kindled,

*Not to come  
argues  
great want  
of loue to our  
brethren.*

1192  
this fire, so he onely is able to quench  
it : some will carelesly tarye at home, or  
not bring all their household with  
them, and so not yeeld so much helpe,  
as they might : especially being called  
vpon both by the commandement of  
Gods magistrates, and by the intreaty  
of his Ministers, must we not thinke  
that they haue not this loue in them  
to their brethren, that they shoulde ?  
Therefore come, come, I beseech you,  
helpe, helpe, come all, for there is  
helpe little enough, yea too little. For  
(to shew it in the same comparison)  
if we did see a fire, though it had much  
helpe, notwithstanding all the water  
that was cast vpon it, and al the paines  
that men tooke about it, it should not  
onely not be extinct, but still burning,  
yea increasing, and the flame thereof  
ascending higher and higher, and it to  
kindle and breake out in more places,  
would we not call for more helpe, and  
iustly blame them that being called  
did not come ? So when wee see this  
fire

Euerie one  
ought to  
helpe, seeing  
that there is  
helpe little  
enough.



fire of the pestilence not to be ceased  
one whit, nay growing into greater  
extremitie and rage in manie places,  
from scores to hundreds, & from hun-  
dreds to thousands; and comming al-  
so neerer to our houses, and so our  
selues and all ours more in danger and  
feare of it, must we not thinke that we  
lacke helpe, and that we had need still  
to call for more? and so to stir vp those  
that come not, or come seldome, and  
to call vpon them that doe, that they  
would bring as manie with them as  
they can, euen their whole familie and  
all the seruants in the same? And doe  
we not see by this, that it is our boun-  
den dutie to do as we do, that we may  
continue it willingly of conscience,  
and that we had not need to beremisse  
or slacke one whit, either in true humi-  
litie for our sinnes, or in seruencie of  
prayer, seeing Gods hand is not flaked,  
but rather stretched out still. There-  
fore to conclude this point, as the  
commandement and cause is publike,  
so

so by our practise let it appeare among vs, that our fasts are so, and not priuate as it were to some few.

*the cause of  
publike fasts  
the wrath  
of God a-  
gainst the  
Church.*

Now concerning the causes of publike fastings, they are set downe particularly to be diuers in the holy Scripture; but for the most part and generally the cause is expresly noted to be the wrath and anger of God against the Church, as appeareth by all the fasts that we reade of in the old & new Testament. And this is diligently to be obserued of vs, that wee seeing the same cause among vs, might knowe, that though wee are commanded by publike authoritie to vse them, and so all are bound to them, yet when wee shall further vnderstand, that God himselfe, not man onely, for this cause calleth vs vnto them, then wee should iudge, that all are bound vnto them so much the more. And this wrath of God (the cause of publike fasts) is considered two waies, either that which is  
1 already come vpon men, or which is  
2 iustly

justly to be feared shortly; and to whether of these two causes wee shall cast our eyes, we shall clearely see, that we haue great cause to do as we do, that is, publickely to humble our selues in fasting before the Lord. For concerning the former, which is the wrath of God presently vpon the Church, wee reade in the time of the Iudges, when in two battels there were slaine of the Israelites fortie thousand; this heauie hand of God being then vpon them, all the children of Israel went vp, and all the people came also vnto the house of God, and wept, and sate there before the Lord, and fasted that day vnto the euening: so that in this present calamitie all the people came to the fast, which was held for it in the house of God. Since this plague began among vs, by all estimation there haue not so few as forty thousand died in this land, therefore wee haue also as great cause to fast for this present apparent token of Gods wrath, as they had, and so all the

*And first of  
all, when it is  
presently  
vpon them.  
Iudg. 20. 26*

Joel 2.15.

As it is now  
upon vs in  
this pesti-  
lence.

the people should come to the house  
of God to that end. Moreover, the  
Prophet *Joel* sayth to the people of Ju-  
dah, that seeing there was so great a  
famine among them, that God com-  
manded them all publikely to fast, say-  
ing, Thus saith the Lord, Blow the  
trumpet in *Sion*, sanctifie a fast, call a  
solemne assemblie, gather the people,  
sanctifie the congregation, gather the  
elders, assemble the children, and those  
that sucke the breasts, let the bride-  
grome goe forth of his chamber, and  
the bride out of her bride chamber,  
let the Priests, the Ministers of the  
Lord weepe. Where we see that be-  
cause the present scarcitie of the fruits  
of the earth was so great, he calleth all  
sorts of men and women, yoong and  
olde, without exception vnto publike  
fasting, to pacifie Gods wrath, and that  
by the commaundement of the Lord,  
saying, Thus saith the Lord. If the an-  
ger of God appearing in the famine,  
was a sufficient cause to moue them to  
it,

it, then seeing it appeareth no lesse, if not a great deale more, in the deadlie contagions, and mortalitie of the pestilence, that we may be assured that the Lord doth require the same of vs also. Againe, if the Israelites when they were ouerthrowen in battle by their enemies the Philistins in the daies of *Samuel*, did thinke that there was great cause to confesse their sinnes vnto God with all humilitie in fasting & praier publikely, according to the direction of the said *Samuel*, who said, Gather al Israel to *Mizpeh*, and I wil pray for you vnto the lord: & they gathered together to *Mizpeh*, and drew water, & powred it out before the Lord, that is, wept abundantly, and fasted the same day, and saide there, wee haue sinned against the Lorde; and afterwards in the daies of *Dauid* vpon the like occasion, of whom, and of all whose companie, it is saide, That *Dauid* tooke hold on his clothes and rent them, and likewise all the men that were with him, and

1. Sam 7.6

2. Sam. I. 12



Psa. 91. 7.

In which respect we are bound so keepe them by the commandment was onely of men, but of God.

and they mourned and wept, and fasted vntill euen for *Saul* and *Jonathan* his sonne, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel because they were slaine with the sword. Then seeing the plague deuoureth no lesse then the sword, of which it is said, that it so destroyeth at noone-daie, that it causeth a thousand to fall on the one side, & ten thousand on the other: & seeing the wrath of God appeareth in the one, as well, as in the other, though wee haue escaped that which wee feared, namely, that wee haue not fallen into the handes of our enemies; yet seeing the Lorde hath sent this great scourge of the pestilence vpon vs which we looked not for, we haue as great cause to humble our selues with fasting, confessing our sins vnto God in praier, as they. So then we may perceiue, that seeing this one cause of publike fasting is among vs, namely the sensible and apparent token of Gods wrath in great measure, that

that the thing it selfe ought to be practised of vs, and that we are called to it now, not onely by the voice of man, but of the Lord our God, and so euery one ought to thinke themselues bound to it so much the more.

Furthermore the wrath of God is to be considered of vs, not only when it is thus presently vpon vs, and may be felt: but whē it may be discerned a far off, and when there is iust cause to fear it, as that that is neere vs, and readie shortly to come vpon vs, if it be not speedily preuented: whereof when the seruants of God haue seene euident signes and apparent tokens, they haue in the wisdom of the spirit of God, sought by fasting and praier to turne it away, and haue not carelessly tarried vntill such time as it came vpon them. And so that hath beene an other sufficient cause of fasting vnto them, namely the signes of Gods wrath by all likelihood shortly to come vpon them. Wherein they haue pro-  
uidently

Secondly the  
signes of gods  
wrath to  
come haue  
beene cause  
of publike  
fasting.

uidently behaued themselves, like vnto those that are wise, who being in their iourney, and spying a blacke cloud to arise, & so perceiuing some great tempest to be at hande, haue either prepared themselves well for it, or haue sought some shelter against it: So they foreseeing by all probable coniectures so great calamity to come vpon them, haue by fasting and praier sought vnto the Lord, as to the onely gouernour and disposer of all things, either of his great mercy to turne it away from them, or of his infinite compassion to mitigate the extremity of it, or to giue them patience and strength to beare it, or that some way or other they might finde fauour with him in it.

And concerning the signes and tokens of Gods wrath shortly to come, they haue wisely obserued and considered of them diuersly: As first of all in the course of his prouidence, that seeing ordinarily such and such causes  
doe

doe bring forth such effects & euents,  
 and therefore by the cause, as by a  
 signe more then probable, they haue  
 not vnaduisedly feared such sequels,  
 and haue seene Gods anger in them.  
 And namely we see that vnseasonable  
 weather, as want of raine in due sea-  
 son, or too great aboundance of it out  
 of time betokeneth scarcitie of the  
 fruites of the earth, and so consequent-  
 ly dearth and famine: preparation for  
 warre by a mightie and strong enimie  
 threatneth the losse of men, and spoil-  
 ing of goods: the beginning of the  
 plague portendeth great mortalitie,  
 and such like, therefore when there  
 hath beene but the beginning of such  
 things, seeing the stormie tempest as it  
 were arising, they haue sought by this  
 ordinance of fasting, as by a sure re-  
 fuge to escape it. And so we read that  
 when there came some and told Ieho-  
 shaphat King of Iudah, saying, There  
 cometh a great multitude against  
 thee from beyond the sea out of *Aram*.

*Which signes  
 haue bene  
 considered in  
 the ordinary  
 course of gods  
 providence.*

2. Chr. 20. 2.

amoueth

T

and

and behold they be in *Hazzon Tamar*, which is in *Engedi*. And *Iehoshaphat* feared, & fast himselfe to seeke the Lord & proclaimed a fast throughout all *Judah*: & *Judah* gathered themselves together to aske counsell of the Lord, they came out of all the cities of *Judah* to inquire of the Lord. Thus we see when this huge armie of the Ammonites & Moabites, and mount *Seir* did but come vp against *Ierusalem* at the first hearing of it, though yet nothing was done, neither were they come to them considering what was likely to be the event of that warre, if they had proceeded, and if the Lord had not holpen them, he proclaimed a fast, and did thus seeke to escape that, which was like to come. So likewise in the time of the captiuitie, when ambitious and cruell *Hazzan* the mortall enemy of the Jews, so breathed after their vtter destruction, that he ceased not to cast lottes from day to day, to finde out a prosperous time to bring his mischieuous



chieuous purpose to passe, and at the last had got the King to set his hande to a Decree concerning the finall rasing of them all out in one daie; and Hest. 4. 6.

*Mordecai* had sent the copie of this commission to the Queene *Hester*: long before the bloodie day of that intended massacre came, they sought vnto the Lorde; for *Hester* commanded heereupon that they should assemble all the Iewes, and fast and pray for her, as she likewise promised for herselfe & for her maides, that they would doe so also: So that these before their enemies began the slaughter, by all probability of that that was done already, seeing what was most like to insue, if God were not mercifull vnto them, to turn the hart of the king towards the, before-hand they sought by fasting & praier to escape it; and did so, as it followeth in that storie more at large. And so by these few examples we see how the seruants of God that haue beene godly wise haue not alwaies

*And so they haue sought to preuent Gods wrath and haue not tarried, till it came vpon them.*

taryed vntil Gods wrath in some of his punishments hath sealed vpon them, but the very foresight of it a loofe of hath bin enough to moue the to seeke vnto the Lorde in fasting and praier to escape it, or to finde mercie in it. Euen as an ingenuous childe, and he that is of anie good disposition seeketh to his father for pardon, not onely when he is vnder the rodde of correction, and feeleth the stripes, but when hee seeth his father with an angrie countenance comming towards him with the rodde in his hande: so they haue not taryed till they haue felt the smart of Gods correction vpon themselues; but the verie shew of his wrath comming against them, hath beene sufficient to moue them, to humble themselves before him, and to craue his pardon.

In which respect also (besides that, that we spake of before) we must needs confesse, that wee haue great cause to fast and pray publikly; for besides that  
great

great wrath of God, that hath beene a  
long time vpon our brethren, which is *In respect of  
Gods wrath  
likely yet  
further to  
come vpon  
vs, there is  
cause of these  
publike fasts.*  
a thing present, and so ought to moue;  
if we further consider, what cause wee  
haue to feare our selues; our houses,  
and our townes, though hitherto by  
the grace of God nothing is come vp-  
on vs we, shall acknowledge it to bee  
true. And to this end we must acknow-  
ledge the nature of this disease to be  
very contagious and infectiue aboue  
all other, and that it spreadeth from  
one place to another after a speciall  
maner; and that it infecteth also after  
an extraordinarie kinde; as not onely  
by touching, and eating and drinking  
with them, and keeping them compa-  
nie that are sicke of it, as some other  
diseases doe; but euen by the breath  
that we draw in, which as it is the most  
common nourishment that wee haue,  
and without the which wee can not  
liue, so it is most subtile and speedie a-  
boue all other; so that it worketh in vs  
with great expedition: whereupon it

*If we consi-  
der the con-  
tagious na-  
ture of the  
plague, how  
speedily, and  
how deadly  
it infecteth.*

2.

*Leu. 14. 34.*

commeth to passe, that euen by passing  
by the, euen suddenly with the breath  
and sauer of them that are infected,  
we are corrupted : and it is a poison,  
and so infecteth deadly and speedilie  
(as all poisons doe) all the parts of the  
body ; and not so much corrupteth the  
humors of the bodie (which is suffici-  
ent to breed deadly diseases) as it infe-  
cteth the heart, and the spirits, and all  
the vitall parts ; and therefore dispat-  
cheth a man quickly, and killeth him  
speedily ; & so may die suddenly, as ex-  
perience teacheth euen in this plague,  
that some being taken into a mans  
house ouer night, haue beene found  
dead in the morning ; and some haue  
fallen from their horses as they trauel-  
led, and so haue died in the hie waies,  
And againe, it is like the leprosie that  
was among the Iews, which did hang  
in their houses and in certaine vessels a  
long time ; so it doeth remaine in the  
houses, and bedding, and garments of  
them that are dead a long time after,  
and

and so breaketh out at the last, sometimes a moneth and a great deale more after, if good order be not taken to airc them, euen then, when they thought that all feare of danger was past. All which doe shew what danger we are in, though yet nothing be come vnto vs. And we may see it much more, if we consider how the Psalmist compareth it to an arrow that flieth from one place to another speedily; when hee saith, Thou shalt not be afraied of the feare of the night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day (speaking of the pestilence) so that as an arrowe flieth from one place quickly to another, so doth this. For a man shall come from one place to another a great way off, and passe thorow many townes without hurting of anie, though himselfe hath the plague, euen as an arrow shal flie aloft in the aire, and do no hurt, nor touch any thing: but then hee shall lodge or rest in such a towne twelue or twentie miles off or more, and there he

3.  
Psal. 91.5.

*Flying a-  
broad spee-  
dilie and  
closely like  
an arrow.*



sickneth and dieth; and leaueth the infection behinde him; euen as an arrowe shot by a strong man is there mortall where it lighteth; so is this arrow of the Lord shot out by his mighty hand; who is skilfull to direct it to the place whither hee mindeth to send it: & so we may be in more danger than we thinke; though we be a great way off, as a skilfull archer standing heere, thooteth his arrow a great way off to the marke. And sometimes they that goe abroad with running sores about them, or hauing the infection in their gariments, and seeming to others to be in health and without danger, haue infected others in the way as they haue gone, where they haue carried but a small while, euen to eat and to drinke: euen as an arrow doeth often hurt by glauncing at a thing, besides the place, where it lighteth. Moreouer, such is the nature of this disease, that we may get hurt not onely by men liuing and dying; but euen by other creatures, which

which shall goe to, or come from such  
places as are infected, as cats & dogs  
most of all: and therefore in time of  
common plagues there is order taken  
in al cities or towns corporate, (which  
are well gouerned) to kill vp all dogs  
that are not shut vp, but runne abroad,  
of what nature, or kinde, or qualitie,  
or price soeuer they be, least by com-  
ming into mens companie they shuld  
spread abroad the infection: And we  
read that some onely but buying a  
dogs skinne in the market, and bring-  
in it home, they haue brought the pe-  
stilence into their house to the ouer-  
throw and destruction of the whole  
familie. Seeing then that it is, & hath  
beene a long time in so many places,  
there is no place so farre off from it, or  
so free, but hath iust cause to feare it  
more or lesse, because there are so ma-  
ny open and secret waies to bring it,  
and so in the ordinarie course of gods  
prouidence all that haue wisdom  
may thinke it likely to come vp-

*And there-  
fore there is  
no place so  
cleere, whe-  
ther it may  
not speedily  
come.*

on them in this time, if the Lorde be  
not mercifull vnto them. Therefore  
in respect of Gods wrath manifestlie  
appearing in this grieuous pestilence,  
though not yet vpon vs, through the  
infinite goodnesse and mercy of God,  
yet iustly to bee feared (as wee haue  
seene) wee must thinke and confesse,  
that wee haue great cause by fasting &  
praier to seeke vnto the Lord to turne  
that from vs before it come; which as  
our sinnes haue deserued, so wee see  
many means, to bring it speedily vpon  
vs, as other of his seruants haue done  
in the like case before. And thus much  
for this present (seeing the time cuttes  
me off from the rest) of the first signe  
and token of Gods wrath likely to  
come, obserued in the course of his  
providence as a sufficient cause of pub-  
like fasting.

HOMIL. IX.

*The ninth Homilie continneth to shew the  
causes of publike fastes, namely, when  
the*

the wrath of God to come hath beene  
iustly feared, in respect of the great  
sinnes, that haue abounded: and of the  
iudgement of God, denounced against  
the same openly by the ministers of  
God. And when Gods wrath hath not  
onely beene vpon themselves, but vpon  
others of their brethren, the children  
of God.



He last daie we entring  
into this treatise of the  
consideration of the  
causes of publike fa-  
stings, haue hitherto  
proceeded thus farre; to shew that the  
seruants of God haue beene moued  
thereunto, not onely when some great  
punishment as a testimonie of Gods  
displeasure hath beene vpon them, but  
when in the course of nature, or of or-  
dinarie meanes to serue Gods proui-  
dence by, there hath beene some like-  
lihood of it: it remaineth that I should  
proceed. Therefore secondarily they  
haue

*The wrath  
of God to  
come, con-  
sidered in  
sinne, that  
hath aboun-  
ded, hath  
been cause  
of publike  
fasts.*

haue considered of Gods displeasure  
likely to come vpon them; by seeing  
and obseruing diligently the manifold  
great finnes, and notorious offences,  
which in their time haue beene com-  
mitted: for which they truely iudged,  
and feared that God must needs some  
waie punish them, according to the  
number and greatnesse of the same,  
though hee had borne with them a  
long time; and the longer that of his  
great patience he had forborne them,  
the greater and more speedie shoulde  
his punishment bee, according to his  
iustice. And this they haue certainly  
gathered from the constant trueth of  
Gods threatnings reuealed in his holy  
lawe, and from the continuall execu-  
tion of the same vpon others from  
time to time. Seeing then that the  
Lord is iust and true, and that he hath  
threatned to punish sinne so and so, as  
is largely set downe in the Lawe and  
the Prophets; specially in the bookes  
of *Moses*, when they haue scene sinne



to abound, then they haue no lesse  
 wisely, then certainly concluded, that  
 wrath is at hand, becaule God is offen-  
 ded. For euen as when all flesh had  
 corrupted their waies vpon earth, hee  
 brought in the flood of water, and  
 drowned the whole world: and when  
 the crie of Sodom and Gomorrah  
 was great, and their sinne exceeding  
 grievous, the Lord rained brimstone  
 and fire from heauen vpon them, and  
 ouerthrew them, and all the inhabi-  
 tants of them: And when the wicked-  
 nesse of the Ammonites and of the  
 Canaanites was full, then the land  
 spued them out: and when the Israe-  
 lites in the time of the Iudges did wic-  
 kedly in the sight of the Lord, and ser-  
 ued *Baalim* and *Ashtarosh*, the wrath of  
 the Lord was hot against them, and he  
 deliuered them into the hands of spoi-  
 lers that spoiled them; and hee solde  
 them into the hands of their enemies,  
 round about them, so that they could  
 no longer stand before their enemies.

And

Gen. 6.

Gen. 18. 20

Gen. 15. 16.

Iudg. 2. 11.

2. Chro. 36.  
15.

And in the time of the Kings for the same cause they were caried away captiues into Babylon; because the Lord sending his messengers to reclaime them from their sinne, rising earlie, because hee had compassion on them, they mocked the messengers of God, and misused his prophets, vntill the wrath of the Lord arose against them, and till there was no remedie: for he brought vpon them the Kings of the Chaldeans, who slew their yong men with the sword, in the house of their Sanctuarie, and spared neither yoong man, nor virgine, ancient nor aged; God gaue all into his hand: And at the last for refusing Christ and his holie Gospell, they were vtterly destroyed by the Romanes: so that alwaies when sinne hath abounded, the wrath of God hath beene neere, and readie to be reuealed from heauen against all vngodlinesse and vnrighteousnesse of men: and they that haue beene wise-hearted haue obserued it:  
and

Rom. I. 18.

and so this hath beene sufficient cause to moue them by fasting and praier to seeke betimes to haue it turned a- waic.

And this they haue done euen then, *Euen then,*  
 when there was no likelihood of anie *when out-*  
 euill to come vpon them in respect of *wardly there*  
 any outward meanes that did portend *hath beene*  
 it, but onely their sinnes (the cause of *no shew of*  
 it) in respect of Gods iustice, did giue *danger.*  
 them cause to feare it. Thus did Ezra *Ezr. 9.1.*  
 the priest and the rest of the Iewes  
 that feared God, euen a verie great  
 congregation, when he vnderstoode,  
 that the Priests, Leuites, and the rest  
 of the people had married strange  
 wiues contrarie to the law of God, e-  
 uen of the Canaanites, Hittites, Iebu-  
 sites, Egyptians, and such like: he fea-  
 red some plague to come vpon them  
 for it, and so confessed their sinne vnto  
 God, and craued pardon with all hu-  
 militie and earnestnesse in fasting and  
 praier: for he rent his clothes, and his  
 garments, and pluckt off the haire off  
 his

his head, and of his beard, and sate  
 downe astonied: and there assembled  
 vnto him all that feared the wordes of  
 the God of Israel, because of the trans-  
 gression of them of the captiuitie, and  
 so he sate downe astonied with them  
 vntill the euening sacrifice: and then  
 he fell vpon his knees, and spread out  
 his hands vnto the Lord God, & made  
 that humble supplication for them,  
 that followeth there. And after that,  
 he arose vp from before the house of  
 God, and went into a chamber, but  
 he did neither eate bread, nor drinke  
 water, for he mourned, because of the  
 transgressions of them of the captiui-  
 tie. This though in respect of all out-  
 ward things they had great cause of  
 reioicing, for he and many of the peo-  
 ple were but newly returned out of  
 their long captiuitie, and were come  
 vp, to Ierusalem from Babel, & *Artab-*  
*shaste* the King of Persia had the giuen  
 him all his request, according to the  
 hand of the Lord his God, which was  
 vpon

Ezr. 9. 6.

Ezr. 10. 6.

Ezr. 7. 6.

vpon him : yet in respect of the com-  
 mon finnes of their time they found  
 Gods wrath, and mourned for it, and  
 by fasting and prayer sought to pre-  
 uent it. If we then had but eyes to see,  
 and hearts to consider of the innume-  
 rable great finnes of our time, which  
 as a great floud haue ouerflowen the  
 whole land, so that there is no place  
 nor calling free from the same : but as  
 it is sayd of the Israelites (The Priests 2. Chro. 36  
 and the people trespassed woonderful- 14.  
 ly) so it may be said of our time, High The common  
 and low haue woonderfully offended finnes of our  
 God : we might easily perceiue, that time might  
 though there were no plague at all a- more vs to  
 mong vs, or punishment vpon vs, nor publike fa-  
 any by all likelihood to be feared; yet sting, if  
 for our finnes, the crie whereof is ex- there were  
 ceeding grievous in the eares of the nothing els.  
 Lord of hosts, and is ascended vp into  
 the heauens long agoe, and calleth for  
 vengeance against vs, as theirs of So-  
 dom and Gomorrah did : wee had iust  
 cause to feare his wrath, and so by fa-  
 V sting



sting and prayer to seeke speedilie to preuent it. For to let passe the strange mariages between the Protestants and Papists, which without any scruple of conscience are too frequently vsed, which seemed to be the onely sinne of that time, in the daies of *Ezra*, that the people of God were so vnequallie yoked, and as it is said there, they had mixed the holy seed with the people of the landes. To let this passe, wee may with the Prophet beholde a thousand abominations more: for what periurie & blasphemie is there besides common swearing? what intolerable pride in all sorts, euen like vnto *Lucifer* himselfe? what swelling one against another? what enuie, heart-burning, hatred, malice, crueltie, oppression? what drunkennesse, and gluttonie, and surfetting? what abominable adulterie, fornications, and all kinde of vncleanesse with chambering and wantonnesse? as though men had cleane forgotten the Lord, and solde themselues

to

2r.9.2.

zek.8.9.

3.15.

1.King.21.

10.

to doe euill. But to passe by all these things with silence, though they bee verie great, let vs looke but to this one thing, the generall contempt of Gods holie Word, that inestimable treasure of his Gospell, which he hath bestowed vpon vs, euen that precious pearle, which when a man hath found, hee should sell all that he hath, and buy it : whether wee consider of those places, where it is not, how it is neglected, & not sought for of them, or where it is, how it is not there regarded; how many haue no care to preach it sincerelie, and more haue no care to follow it in their liues : so that the profession that is made of it, is more for estimation and credit, than of conscience and loue that then beare to it; and it is more in the head than in the heart, more in the tongue than in deed, more in shewe than in trueth. And a great number though they haue had it thus long, yet are not only not bettered thereby, but are a great deale worse than they were

Math. 12.

43.

*Especially  
the general  
contempt of  
the Gospell  
in all places*

ath. 10.

b. 3. 25.

many yeeres ago. This open and manifest contempt of the Gospell, I say, which is a greater sinne than all the finnes of *Sodom*, (For it shall be easier for them of the land of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* in the day of iudgement, then for them) we must needs confesse, that for it we had cause long agoe to feare the death of our most gracious soueraigne Queene; and now since it hath happened, we may well say with *Job*, The thing that we feared, is come vpon vs: and though the Lord hath maruellously and beyond all our hope recompensed that great losse, by sending so worthy a King into her roome; yet we might then haue feared some other great punishment: as we see how this plague hath followed, and there was cause to feare it before, though few did thinke of it; and what may be next vnto this, we know not, wee are sure that much hath beene deserued, and so by fasting and prayer in respect of these great finnes, wee had need to seeke to  
the

the Lord to turne it away. And thus much for the second cause, which might mooue vs to feare some great wrath and displeasure of God to bee shewed in some kinde of correction and rodde of his, whereby wee might willingly humble our selues before him in publike fasting, euen the great sinnes that in all sorts euery where abound, and most shamefully lift vp their heads vncontroled.

Thirdly and last of all, concerning this matter the seruants of God in former times haue wisely discerned beforehand of the stormie tempest of Gods wrath to come, by the fearefull threatnings of Gods iudgement denounced against them by his faithfull seruants that haue spoken to them in his Name: whom as they haue beene perswaded, that they haue beene stirred vp by his holy spirit, to speake vnto them from his mouth, and to warne them thereby out of his word, as from himselfe; so they haue feared the things

*Gods wrath  
to come  
appearing  
his iudgement  
denounced  
haue been  
causes of  
publike  
sins.*

that haue beene spoken against them,  
and as though they did see them com-  
ming, haue sought vnto him by fasting  
and prayer, to escape them. And this  
is the thing that mooued the King of  
*Ninine* to doe as he did, namelie, that  
when hee heard the preaching of the  
Prophet *Iona*, how hee did crie out a-  
gainst their sinne, and threatned Gods  
vengeance to light speedily vpon the  
whole citie, vnlesse they did speedilie  
repent; euen that within fortie dayes  
*Ninine* should be ouerthrowen: when  
this word came vnto him, hee arose  
from his throne, & laied his robe from  
him, and couered himselfe with sacke-  
cloth, and sate in ashes, and proclai-  
med a fast thorow the whole citie (by  
the counsell of the King & his nobles)  
saying, Let neither man nor beast feed  
nor drinke water: that so in all humili-  
tie they seeking to God for mercy, and  
turning euery man frō his euill waies,  
they might bee spared in this which  
they saw, they had so great cause to  
feare:



feare : for it is sayd, The people of *Ni-* Iona.3.5.  
*nine* beleueed God, and proclaimed a  
fast, and put on sackcloth from the  
greatest of them, euen to the least of  
them : they beleueed in God, and that  
moued them to do so ; that is, they be-  
leeueed that *Iona*, who thus preached,  
was a true Prophet, and that God had  
sent him to doe this message vnto  
them, and that their sinnes had deser-  
ued this vtter destruction threatned,  
and that of his iustice God might  
bring it vpon them, and therefore  
though they yet sawe not howe and  
which way it should come to passe,  
yet beleeuing these things, they fell  
to fasting and prayer, to pacifie Gods  
wrath, and to escape it. So that as the  
sound of the trumpet doth warne men  
to prepare themselves to battell, and  
to go meet with their enemies : so this  
preaching of Gods seruant, who lifted  
vp his voice against them, as a trum-  
pet, did awaken them out of the sleepe  
of security, and to meet the Lord, who

was become their enemy by reason  
of their sinnes; and in fasting and prai-  
er humbly submitting themselves vn-  
to him, to intreat at his hands condi-  
tions of peace. And truely in this re-  
spect, if we should not in like maner  
seek to the Lord with fasting & prai-  
er, that his wrath might be appeased  
towards vs, we could not plead igno-  
rance, as not knowing any cause why  
we should doe so: for we must needs  
confesse, that the faithfull Ministers of  
Christ haue often and long ago in the  
pulpits proclaimed open warre against  
vs for our sinnes; that is, they haue  
threatned Gods heauie iudgements  
against vs out of his Word, to rowse  
vs from the drowsie securitie of sinne.

Haue we not heard it preached vn-  
to vs, as it was to the Iewes, that the  
kingdome of God should bee taken  
from vs for our great barrenesse, and  
given to a nation, that should bring  
forth the fruits thereof? And haue we  
not heard the words of the Prophet,  
that

*We haue not  
wanted this  
cause of sub-  
like fasting  
among vs.*

*Mat. 21.43.*

*Isa. 5.1.*

that whereas the Lord had planted among vs a vineyard in a very fruitfull hill, and had hedged it, and gathered out the stones of it, and had planted it with the best plants, and had built a tower in the middes thereof, and made a wine-presse therein, and then looked that it should bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wilde grapes: that therefore hee would take awaie the hedge thereof, that it might be eaten vp, and would breake downe the wall thereof, that it might be troden down, and that he would lay it waste, that it should not be digged, but briars and thornes should growe vp in it, and would commaund the cloudes that they should not raine vpon it? And as this hath beene threatned, so the Lord might according to our deserts, after the death of our late *Queene Elizabeth*, haue giuen vs vp either into the hands of some forraine enemies abroad, or rebellious persons at home, who might haue broken downe  
all,

2. Sam. 24.  
13.

all, and laid vs & the Church of God waste: Now though he hath spared vs this waie, yet according to former iudgement denounced, hee hath not let vs alone in our sinnes, but hath taken vs into his owne hande, by sending this pestilence among vs; which *Dauid* accounted a great fauour, when it was offered vnto him by the prophet *Gad*, after that hee had offended the Lord in numbring of the people, whether of these three punishments he would choose, either seuen yeeres famine to come vpon the land, or to flie three monthes before his enemies, or that there should be three daies pestilence in the land; saying, I am in a woonderfull great strait: let vs now fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of men, and so hee chose the pestilence, as a mercifull visitation of the Lord: and so must we thinke, that though the Lorde hath brought this vpon vs for our sinnes, according to  
that

that that hath beene threatned by his  
seruants, yet heerein he hath delt verie  
mercifully with vs, in that he hath de-  
liuered vs from the cruel oppression of  
bloody men. We must needs then ac-  
knowledge, that the seruants of God  
haue not kept silence against our sins;  
but haue out of his worde shewed,  
that of his iustice and trueth hee must  
needes punish vs some waie for our  
sinnes, vnlesse we speedily repent. And  
this as it hath beene alwaies the vsuall  
dealing of God towards his Church  
(to which specially he hath giuen his  
worde, and the Ministers thereof) to  
warne them of his deserued punish-  
ments beforehand, as it is saide of the  
Prophet *Ezekiel*, Sonne of man I haue  
made thee a watchman to the house of  
Israel, therefore heare the worde at  
my mouth, and giue them warning  
from me: so we haue not wanted this  
great mercie of God. For by the Mi-  
nisters of our time from the trueth of  
Gods worde wee haue beene warned  
of

*For Gods  
iudgements  
to come, for  
our finnes  
haue beene  
constantly  
threatned.*

*Ezek. 3. 17.*



of his iudgements to come from time to time. VWho though by the spirit of prophecie they could not foretel whe, in what daie, or moneth, or yeere, or after what maner, either with the sworde, famine, or pestilence, as the prophets did in their time, to whom it was speciallie reuealed: yet out of the most certaine trueth of Gods worde, and the constant course of his dealing in former times, they haue constantlie auouched and faide, that God must needes before it bee long some waies punish vs for our sinnes: as it is nowe come to passe, and as it hath beene preached vnto the people before.

Math. 3. 10.

And hath not this bene seuerelie denounced against vs often, which *John Baptist* did against the Iewes? Now is the axe put to the roote of the tree: therefore euerie tree, which bringeth not forth good fruite, shal be hewen downe, and cast into the fire? hath it not beene preached, that God would vtterly destroy all those that liue vnprofitable

profitable vnder his Gospell, destroie them, I say, euen by the rootes? yet vndoubtedly this hath beene often sounded in the eares of all hearers: and that the figge-tree that hath nothing on it, but leaues shall be accursed and wither, that is, all hypocrites that content themselues with a bare outward profession of the Gospell, and labour not for the inward vertue and power of it in their life, to the glory of God, and the benefite of others, shall be discovered in time, and come to nought: according to the praier of the prophet.

chap. 21. 19

Doe well, O Lord vnto those, that be good & true in their hearts: but these that turne aside by the crooked waies, them shal the Lord lead with the workers of iniquitie: but peace shall bee vpon Israel. And though he be a most patient God towards al, euen towards the wicked, yet he wil seuerely punish those at the last, that abuse his great patience: as appeareth in the parable of a certaine housbandman, who had.

Psal. 125. 4

Luk. 13. 6.

a figge-tree planted in his vineyard, & he came, and sought fruit therein, and found none: then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold this three yeres haue I come, and sought fruite of this figge-tree, and find none: cut it down; why keepeth it also the ground barren? And he answered and saide vnto him, Lord let it alone this yeere also, till I digge round about it, and dunge it, and if it beare fruit, well: if not, then after thou shalt cut it downe. So the God of patience, who thereby leadeth all men to repentance, or leaueth them without excuse, hath waited for our repentance and amendment of life, as the fruit of all the paines that he hath taken with vs in his Gospell, but vndoubtedly, if after this preaching from yeere to yeere, we remaine vnfruitfull, at the last he will root them vp, which make the Church barren, which is in it owne nature the most fruitfull place in the world. These & such like things haue not onely beene preached euerie where

Rom. 2. 4.

And therefore wee  
ought long

where, but with great earnestnesse and  
zeale so vttered, that we might easilie  
discerne, that they spake not of them-  
selues, but were thereunto stirred vp  
by the spirit of God, so that God war-  
ned vs of his iudgements by them. and  
therefore wee should haue beleued  
them, and so haue sought heeretofore  
by fasting and praier to haue these  
things turned away. For as *David* whē  
the prophet *Nathan* terrified his con-  
science with the fearefull denuntiation  
of Gods iudgement for his sinne, say-  
ing, Wherefore hast thou despised  
the commandement of the Lorde, to  
doe euill in his sight? therefore the  
sword shall neuer depart from thine  
house; then he besought the Lord, &  
fasted, and lay all night vpon the earth,  
before all came vpon him: And as *A-  
hab* King of Israel when *Eliab* the pro-  
phet reproouing him sharply for his  
sinne, saide vnto him in the name of  
God, behold I will bring euill vpon  
thee, and take awaie thy posteritie, &c.  
when

agoe to haue  
sought vnto  
God in fa-  
sting and  
praier, to  
escape this  
wrath.

2. Sam. 12. 9

1. King. 21.  
21.

Luk. 7. 32.

Iona 3. 5.

when hee heard these words, hee rent his clothes, and put sackcloth vpon him, and fasted: and so both these, when they did heare from the messenger of God, what was due to them for their sinnes, they sought by priuate fasting to haue it turned away: So when the Lord euerie where stirred vp his seruants with all zeale and feruencie of spirit more then ordinarily thus to speake vnto vs, and did sing vnto vs the dolefull song of his heauie iudgments, and so with *Iohn Baptist* did mourne vnto vs, that we might haue wept: we should haue done as the Niniuites did, that is, wee should haue beleeued God, and his seruants, and haue put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least, and so by fasting and praier haue sought vnto the Lord to turne it away: & not carelesly to haue taried till the hand of God was vpon vs, as now we haue done. Wee should haue beene wise, as others haue beene before vs, to haue taken knowledge of Gods  
wrath



wrath to come by the threatnings of his word, preached vnto vs by his seruants, and so sought to preuent them as they did.

Thus we see, that whether we looke to the time present, or to come; and therein to the course of Gods prouidence, whereby (if wee consider all things well) wee haue more cause to feare our selues, then to be secure: or wee looke to sinne, that aboundeth euerie where, which being vnrepented of, calleth for vengeance at Gods hand against vs; or wee consider this, that our finnes haue beene sharply reprooued, and Gods curse for them threatned against vs by those that haue spoken vnto vs in his name: we haue great cause to doe, as we doe, I meane, to resort thus to the Church, to seeke vnto God by fasting and praier: yea wee should haue done it long before: and seeing that there are so manie causes of publike fasting among vs, wee must therefore thinke, that the.

*A conclusion  
shewing  
what cause  
there is  
of pub-  
like fasting  
in respect of  
Gods wrath  
appearing a-  
gainst our  
selues.*

Lorde requireth the thing it selfe at our hands. Which we shall the rather also be perswaded of, if besides all this that hath beene spoken to that end, we further consider that the people of God alwaies making this a sufficient cause of their fastings, euē the wrath of God appearing against his Church (as we haue seene before) haue considered & regarded this wrath of his to moue them thereunto, not onely against themselves particularly, but against others also of the same societie and fellowship of true religion, that themselves were of, through a mutuall feeling and compassion, which they haue one of another, as the liuely members of one and the same mysticall bodie, whereof Christ Iesus is the head, and which he quickeneth by one spirit, according to the doctrine of Saint Paul: Reioice with them that reioice, and weepe with them that weepe, bee of like affection one towards an other. So that though they haue bene free from any

*The wrath  
of God a-  
gainst other  
churches  
haue moued  
the godly to  
publike fa-  
sting.*

*Rom. 12.15*

any token at all of Gods displeasure  
 themſeues, yet when they haue ſeene  
 it lie heauilie vppon the ſhoulders of  
 their brethren, they haue by fasting  
 and praier put to their helping hand, Gal. 6. 2.  
 and haue ſought to remooue it, that  
 they might be eaſed; & ſo haue borne  
 one anothers burden ( as the Apoſtle  
 ſaith ) fulfilling therein the lawe of  
 Chriſt. As appeareth by the faſt, that  
 was held at *Antiochia*, which waſta- Act. 13. 2.  
 ken in hande for the great miſerie of  
 the mother Church of Ieruſalem, ra-  
 ther then for any preſent calamity that  
 was then in that citie. For it is ſhewed  
 in the Chapter going before, that *He- chap. 13. 1.*  
*roa* the King raiſed a great perſecuti-  
 on againſt that Church, and ſtretched  
 out his hand to vexe it there, and firſt  
 he killed *James* the brother of *Iohn*  
 with the ſword: and when he ſaw that  
 it pleaſed the people, hee proceeded  
 further to take *Peter* alſo, and when he  
 had caught him, he put him in priſon,  
 cauſed him to be bound with chaines,

and deliuered him to foure quaternions of soldiers to be kept: and what he would haue done to him, wee may easily coniecture, if the Lord had not disappointed him, as it followeth in that Chapter: where is shewed how this cruell persecuting tyrant, when he was in the midst of his pride, and was cōtented to be saluted by his flatterers with the name of God, saying, the voice of God, and not of man, then the Angell of the Lord smote him; because he gaue not glorie vnto God, so that he was eaten vp of wormes, & gaue vp the ghost. Then presently the Euangelist makerh mention of this fast, when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were returned from Ierusalem to Antiochia, and as it is most like, told them of all the troubles that were there; and there is no mention of any speciall calamitie that was there, but rather of Gods great blessings, for there were many excellent men, euen Prophets and teachers, whereof some are named

med there : so that it is manifest , that *In which re-  
spect we  
haue caused  
do it, for the  
calamitie  
that is vpon  
our bre-  
thren.*  
this fast was to intreat for the Church  
at Ierusalem. Therefore though there  
were no euill at all vpon our selues, vp-  
on our owne persons , or any that be-  
long vnto vs, or vpon our towne , or  
any likelihood of any to come vpon  
vs : yet this fearefull and great plague  
that is , and hath bene a long time vp-  
on our brethren in many places of this  
land ( vnited vnto vs in the profession  
of the same religion & Gospell, besides  
the same allegiance which we owe all  
vnto the same soueraigne King) in ma-  
nie places, ( I say) as in London, Nor-  
wich , Yarmouth , Cambridge, and  
such like, should moue vs in compas-  
sion to succour them with our praiers  
as much as wee can , and therefore to  
intreat the Lorde to remooue this hea-  
uie hand of his from them, though we  
feele not the weight of it our selues, &  
so to fast publicly for these cities and  
townes , as they of Antiochia did for  
them of Ierusalem.



Therefore no man must thinke, that  
these publike fasts which we keepe by  
the commaundement of our gouer-  
nours, doe concerne others and not  
themselues, nor say, We are all well  
heere (God bee thanked) what need  
we vex and trouble our selues with a-  
nie such thing before we haue cause?  
this order is appointed for such places  
where the plague is, heere is none yet,  
neither is any neere vs, Gods name be  
blessed for it: These are good wordes  
indeed, and I pray God, that they may  
so consider of the goodnesse of God  
towards vs indeed, that wee may la-  
bour to be truely thankfull to him for  
the same. But doth not the Apostle  
say, that in the naturall body by the  
verie instinct of nature, if one member  
suffer and be pained, all suffer with it,  
and haue the feeling of it? And shall  
not we which are the bodie of Christ,  
and members for our part (as he saith  
in the same place) by the inward wor-  
king of Gods spirit, be mooued with  
the

Cor. 12.  
6.

That as in  
the naturall  
body there is  
feeling of  
the paine of  
other mem-  
bers: so it  
may be in  
spirituall.

the aduersitie, sickenesse, paine, and losse of our brethren? but bee so hard-hearted, and voide of all life of the spirit of God, of all sence of feeling, as dead and rotten members, or rather cleane cut off from the bodie, that we shal daily heare of many thousands of our brethren & sisters in Christ to be in so great heauinesse and sorrow for themselves and for their friends, and not to bee moued with it? and yet count our selues members of that bodie, when wee shall haue little or no feeling at all of their estate. That part of the bodie is dead, that is without feeling, not onely of it owne selfe, but of the other members; so we may wel thinke of our selues, that we are cleane voide of that spirit of life, that quickneth the whole body, if in so great miserie of others we should be senselesse, & not moued with it. Did not *Nehemiah* that woorthy seruant of God, though he was in the Kings court, and in office there, and in great fauor with

Neh. I. 2.

As Nehemi-  
ah being in  
great prospe-  
ritie mour-  
ned and fa-  
sted for the  
miserie of  
his brethren.

the King, and all was well with him,  
yet so sorrow for the miserie of his  
brethren in Ierusalem, that he fasted,  
and praied for them according as it  
is written of him: That there came  
*Hanani* one of his brethren vnto him,  
and some other of the men of Indah,  
and hee asked them concerning the  
Iewes that were deliuered, which were  
of the residue of the captiuitie, and  
concerning Ierusalem: & they said vn-  
to him, the residue that are left of the  
captiuitie there in the prouince are in  
great affliction & in reproch, and the  
wall of Ierusalem is broken downe, &  
the gates thereof are burnt with fire: &  
when he heard those words, hee sat  
downe and wept, and mourned cer-  
taine daies, and fasted, and praied be-  
fore the God of heauen for them:  
which zealous and godly praier of his  
proceeding from the aboundance of  
his sorrowful heart is set downe there.  
And this griefe of heart which hee  
conceaued for the affliction of others  
did

did so worke vpon him in this great prosperitie of his owne, that hee was not able to hide it, but it did manifestly bewraie it selfe in his countenance, so that the king, when he waited at the table did perceiue it, and asked him the cause of it, saying, Why is thy countenance sadde, seeing thou art not sicke, this is nothing but sorrowe of heart; Then he told him the cause of it, and said to the king, God saue the King for euer. why shoulde not my countenance be sadde, when the citie and house of the sepulcher of my fathers lieth waste, and the gates thereof are deuoured with fire? Thus we see how hee in all pittie and compassion sorrowed for the desolation of others: and shall we thinke, that we may now giue our selues to feasting, and chearing, to myrth and pleasure, to recreation and pastimes, and to all kinde of meeting to these endes, as in times past, and haue little or no sorrowe at all, when our brethren in other places  
are

*Then shall  
others also  
pittie vs in  
the like case  
and praie  
for vs.*

are in great affliction, and manie  
houses lie waste with the pestilence?  
We must doe, as wee would be done  
vnto; if we were in their case, or in any  
other miserie, we would be glad, that  
others should pittie vs, and in pittie  
praie for vs, and it would be a great  
comfort vnto vs, to heare that any did  
so: then must we in the meane season  
thus pittie others, and in a brotherly  
compassion praie for them; that when  
it shall be our owne case that waie, or  
any other way, we might not bee left  
to our selues, but others might doe as  
much for vs, as we haue done for them  
before, according to the promise of  
our Sauiour Christ in the Gospell:  
Giue, and it shall bee giuen you, a  
good measure, pressed downe, shaken  
together, and running ouer shall men  
giue vnto your bosome, for with what  
measure you mete, with the same shall  
men mete vnto you againe.

*Leu. 6. 36.*

It is written of *Vriah* the Hittite one  
of *Daniels* woorthie captaines, that  
when



when hee was sent for home in pollicie by the King, that by going home to his owne house, the adultery that was comitted with his wife *Beersheba* in his absence might be hidden: and therefore the king said vnto him, Goe downe to thine house, and wash thy feete: so *Vriah* departed out of the kings pallace, and the king sent a present after him; but *Vriah* slept at the doore of the kings pallace with all the seruants of his Lorde, and went not downe to his house: then they tolde *Dauid*, saying, *Vriah* went not downe to his house, and *Dauid* said vnto *Vriah*, comest thou not from thy iourney? Why doest thou not goe downe to thine house? Then *Vriah* answered *Dauid*: The Arke, and Israel, and Iudah dwell in tentes, and my Lord *Ioab*, and the seruants of my Lord abide in the open fieldes: shall I then goe into mine house, to eate and drinke, and to lie with my wife? by thy life, and by the life of thy soule I will

2. Sam. 11.

*Vriah* departed from his lawfull delights, because his brethren were in aduersity

2451  
1242

So should we  
fall from our  
pleasures in  
his great so-  
row & lesse  
of others.

will not do this thing. If this good and  
holy man *Uriah* would not go home  
to his house, and make much of him-  
selfe, when the King bad him, & when  
there were so manie reasons for it, be-  
cause his Lord and captaine *Ioab*, vnder  
whom he serued, and manie other of  
the people his fellow souldiers were in  
the field before their enemies, and so  
in danger of their liues, but thought it  
meet in godly wisedome, though hee  
was absent from them, to beare part of  
the burden with them. Then wee, if  
wee haue the like compassion to our  
brethren that hee had, should thinke,  
that wee ought to abridge our selues  
somewhat at the least of our honest  
lawfull delights, and to cut off not on-  
ly all superfluity and excesse, but some-  
what of our ordinarie diet, and to for-  
row with those our brethren, who  
though they are not in the open fields  
and in the face and feare of their ene-  
mies, yet are in no lesse danger & feare  
of their liues by reason of this great  
plague;

plague; which as an arrow flieth by Psal. 91. 5.  
 day, and walketh in the darkenesse, and  
 destroieth at noon day, so that neither  
 day nor night they are in safetie, or  
 without feare, and is as deadlie as the  
 sword, for it causeth a thousand to fall  
 on the one side, and ten thousand on  
 the other: and so they haue manie  
 fearefull dayes, and take little rest in  
 the night, neither can they eat their  
 meat quietly, or with any comfort. So  
 that vnlesse we will be addicted, and  
 liue whollie to our selues, and care for  
 none other, this great wrath vpon our  
 brethren so long and so heauie, should  
 driue vs to weepe with them, to fast  
 and pray for them: and seeing they are  
 so greatly humbled in themselues, we  
 should some wayes cast downe our  
 selues with them. Therefore let vs set  
 their lamentable estate before our  
 eyes, and let it be a looking glasse vnto  
 vs; let vs in the feare of God thinke of  
 it seriously and in good earnest, as if it  
 were our owne case, that wee may be  
 thorowly

*To that end  
 we should  
 seriously  
 thinke of  
 their lamen-  
 table estate.*

thorowly moued with it : and let vs not haue such stonie hearts, so void of all bowels of compassion, that wee should heare weekely of the death of our brethren, and what great lamentation is made euerie where, some for the losse of their husbands and wiues, some for the death of their parents and children, others for the departure of their sisters and brethren, friendes, neighbours, kinsfolke and acquaintance, and we should haue no sorrow for it at all : this were the verie next way to prouoke God against our selues, and wilfullie to pull the same miserie vpon our owne heads. *David* was so full of pitie, that he fasted, & besought the Lord not onely when the hand of God was vpon some of his own household, as when the Lord had striken the child that was begotten in adultery, & so it lay sick: but also when it was vpon others, euen vpon his enemies, as he professeth himselfe; They rewarded mee euill for good, to haue spoiled

2. Sam. 12.

35.

Psal. 35. 13.

spoiled my soule, yet I when they were sicke, I was clothed with a sack, I humbled my selfe with fasting, & my prayer was turned vpon my bosome, that is, I prayed for them continually: I behaued my selfe, as to my friends, or as to my brother; I humbled my selfe, mourning as one that bewaileth his mother. If he did thus for his enimies, how much more should we doe it for them, who haue giuen vs no other cause to iudge of them, but as of our friends? if he did it for some one, or a few priuate persons, then how much more should we doe it, when the affliction is so common? and not onely to manie persons, but to manie places, euen the chiefe cities and townes of this realme.

When as *Haman* sought the destruction of *Mordecai* principally, because hee would not satisfie his proud humour in giuing him that reuerence, which hee required, and then for his sake the destruction of all the  
Iewes:



Hest. 3. 5.

Hester being  
without dan-  
ger, suffred  
for the misfe-  
ry of others.

Iewes: for his malice was so great,  
and hee was so full of wrath and in-  
dignatiō against him, that he thought  
it too little, to lay hands onely one  
*Mordecay*, and bicause they had shew-  
ed him the people of *Mordecay*, *Ha-*  
*man* sought to destroy all the Iewes,  
that were throughout the whole king-  
dome of *Ahasuerosh*, euen the people  
of *Mordecay*: and had preuailed thus  
farre with the king, that he had obtai-  
ned a commission to that end sealed  
with the kings ring, euen to roote out,  
to kill and destroy all the Iewes both  
yoong and old, children, & women in  
one day: and Queene *Hester*, who was  
a Iew herselfe, had intelligence of this,  
from *Mordecay*: she might haue  
thought that al this did not appertaine  
vnto her; she being the Queene, and  
so deare vnto the king, none durst be  
so bold, as to touch her; if all the rest  
of the Iewes were flaine, yet she shuld  
escape: for all this she is in great com-  
passion affected with the sorrow and  
miseric

miserie of the rest of the people, and so  
 she putterh off her princely attire, en-  
 treth into her secret chamber, & there  
 with her maides humbleth her selfe be- Heb. 4. 16.  
 fore God for them in fasting and prayer  
 three dayes, and three nights together.  
 If then it were possible for vs in this so  
 common and daungerous contagion  
 and mortality of many of our brethren  
 in so many places of this land disperfed,  
 to haue as good hope and likelihoode  
 of our owne securitie and freedome  
 from it, as this good Queene might  
 haue had from that destruction, that  
 was intended generally against all the  
 Iewes; yet wee should be so touched  
 with the estate of others, that are like  
 to perish, that we should seek to succor  
 them, at the least by our prayers and  
 supplications vnto God for them, with  
 fasting and humbling of our selues to  
 that end, as she did. But especially, we  
 should be farre from that prophane se-  
 curitie, and carnall voluptuousnesse,  
 which is noted to haue beene in the.

*So should we  
 that are  
 whole, for  
 them that  
 are visited  
 with the  
 plague.*

Iest. 3. 15.

King and *Haman*, that they two sate drinking, and making of good cheere, when the whole Citie of *Schusshan* was in great perplexitie: so we should giue our selues to eating and drinking, and all kind of mirth and iolitie, like Epicures and belligods, as it is to be feared that too many doe, when in many Cities and Townes, other are in great distresse and perplexitie of mind. Yea, we are to feare that fewe of the better sort, haue layde this great visitation so neere their heart as they should, which is one cause, that it continueth so long, and in that great measure, that it doth. Let vs then put vpon vs the person of our brethren, and labour to haue the feeling of their estate, as though it were our owne: and then we shall know and confesse, that if there had beene no order taken for these fastings publikely, wee in loue should haue submitted our selues vnto them priuately: but now seeing we are commanded by the publike authoritie  
of

A conclusion  
shewing  
what cause  
we haue to  
fast for our  
brethren.

of our Superiors, and that also vpon so good ground, as wee haue heard, that wee are bound vnto it so much the more. And the rather that we might doe it, we may know thus much, that they obserue this fast in *Scotland* for vs, because now we are not onely vnder one Religion, but vnder the same gouernement, and therefore we must account the estate of the one common to the other, as they by this practise for their part, shew that they doe: if they that are so farre off, are moued with it so greatly; then we that are so neere, must needs be too sencelesse, and void of compassion, if we should not by fasting and prayer seeke, that so great a wrath of God, so long continued, might in Gods most blessed time bee remooued and taken cleane away: that so it might please him of his infinite mercie to worke that true repentance in all, whereby he might be moued to heale all those places, that haue a long time bene diseased, that there might be,

that intercourse of dealing betweene man and man in all places without danger or feare, that hath beene; and that it might not onely be remooued, but with the fauour of God, and with the amendement of all our sinnefull liues, that so it might be a blessing in deede, and not a curse, and that we may so profit by it for the time to come, that we take that warning, which our Sauiour Christ gaue vnto the diseased man whom he had healed: Behold thou art made whole; sinne no more, least a worse thing come vnto thee. Which grace, God grant vnto vs, and to all the people of this lande, for Iesus Christs sake: to whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost, three persons, and one true immortall, inuifible, and only wise God be ascribed from vs, and from all his creatures all honour, glory, and praise, power and thankesgiuing, from this time foorth and for euer hereafter, world without end. Amen.

Ioh. 5. 14.



# A direction for Prayer :

*Fit and conuenient for all those,  
that being ignorant or vnac-  
quainted with priuate prayer, are  
desirous to pray by themselues.*

1  First let not your ior-  
dinary praers be sud-  
den : but take some  
time beforehand by  
meditation to pre-  
pare your selfe vnto praier; and let  
this be the beginning of your prai-  
er, that God would prepare your  
heart vnto praier. *Eccl.4.17. Math.*  
*6.6. Psal.108.1.*

2 Then make an humble confession  
of your sinnes vnto God; and that  
both generally that you haue bene  
conceiued and borne in, and conti-  
nually liued in; breaking his holie  
law daily, in thought, worde, and  
deed: and of some more particular-  
ly, wherein you haue most offended

him in any part of your life: *Psal. 40. 12. & 51. 4. 5. & 32. 5. Dan. 9. 5. 6.*

3 Acknowledge vnto God from the bottome of your hart, that for these sinnes of yours, is most due vnto you his heauie wrath and indignation, and all those punishments and plagues, which in his Law he hath threatned to bring vpon sinners, both in this life & the life to come: and more specially iudge your selfe most woorthie of those particular iudgements, that any waies you are in danger of, or that you are presently in. *Ezr. 9. 6. 15. Dan. 9. 7. &c. Luk. 23. 41. Psal. 130. 3.*

4 Pray that in the conscience of this fearefull estate of yours, you may be humbled before God in that maner and measure, that so great a sinner should be: and that in all humilitie you might cast downe your selfe in your owne conceit before God, and his holy Angels, and all men, in respect of the desert of your sinnes

finnes so much as you should doe,  
and no more. 1. *Cor.* 11. 31. *Math.*  
11. 28. *Luk.* 15. 59.

- 5 To this end desire God to giue you  
a broken and a contrite spirite, that  
your hart being soft and tender, his  
word, both the Law and the curses  
thereof, and the Gospell with the  
promises of the same, together  
with all his workes of iustice and  
mercy, vpon your selfe and vpon o-  
thers might worke on your consci-  
ence, as they ought to do. *Luk.* 18.  
13. *Psa.* 51. 17. *Esa.* 66. 2.

- 6 Thus groaning vnder the heauie  
burden of them, desire God ear-  
nestly for Christs sake to ease you  
of them, and to bestow vpon you  
the free pardon and forgiuenesse of  
them: receiuing the sacrifice of  
Christs death as your full rancome:  
and intreat him most earnestly  
for those sinnes, that most trou-  
ble you. *Psal.* 25. 7. 18. & 51. 1. 2. 7.  
&c. *Dan.* 9. 17. &c.

7 Beseech him to release you of all those fearefull iudgements of his, which you haue most righteously deserued, both in this world and in the world to come : and especially those which you most feare : & that he wold ease you of al those publike & priuate calamities, that any waies for your sinnes you are presently in.

*Psal. 79. 8. 9. Iona. 3. 8. & 1. King. 8. 33. 36. &c.*

8 Pray for the increase of your faith, that you may more and more beleue the forgiuenesse of your sins, by the ministerie of the Gospell, & the vse of his Sacraments : and that you may haue speciall faith both in those promises, and for the forgiuenesse of those sinnes that you desire most of all to be confirmed in. *Psal.*

*51. 1. 7. 11. 15. & 25. 7. Mar. 9. 24.*

9 And then pray for these fruites of faith, namely, that you may haue peace of conscience, and quietnesse of minde, knowing that you are discharged

discharged before gods iudgement  
 fear: and that you may in the feeling  
 of his loue reioice with an vnspeak-  
 able ioy, both aboue all worldlie  
 ioies, and in the midst of all world-  
 ly sorrowes: and thirdly, that you  
 may haue good hope for the time  
 to come, euen in this world most of  
 all of your saluation; and that that  
 may suffice you. *Rom. 5.1. Psal. 51.8.*  
*12. Rom. 15.13. Heb. 6.9.*

10 Aske the daily increase of vnfa-  
 ined repentance for al your sins past,  
 and present corruptions generally:  
 and more specially for all those,  
 whereof there is most cause: and  
 not onely that you may be heartily  
 sorie for the, but that you may also  
 hate and loath them, & striue most  
 earnestly against them. *Rom. 7.24.*  
*Psal. 51. 10. & 2. Cor. 12.8.*

11 That you might heereafter pre-  
 uaile against sin, and walke in the  
 commandements of God, aske the  
 increase of the graces of his holie  
 spirit:



spirit: and these not only generally,  
but some more specially by name,  
whereof you stand in most neede.

*Psal.* 119. 33. 34. &c. *Psal.* 51. 12.

- 12 And that you might obtaine these,  
pray that you may make conscience  
to vse daily all the meanes of your  
saluation, publikely and priuately,  
as all the exercises of the worde and  
prayer, together with the keeping  
of a good conscience, and that God  
would daily blesse them to you for  
these endes. 1. *Thes.* 5. 19. 20. & 1.  
*Tim.* 1. 19.

- 13 Obtaining these graces, pray God  
to blesse you in your particular cal-  
ling: and namely, that therein you  
may be painefull, and also profita-  
ble: and for all things that might  
further you this way. *Psal.* 127. 1.  
*Prouer.* 31. 13. &c. 2. *Thes.* 3. 10. &c.  
*Gen.* 24. 12.

- 14 Aske life, and health, and all out-  
ward things, as they may most fur-  
ther you in the aboue-named:  
namely

namely as they may make you  
more fit to serue God and to doe  
good vnto others : name some  
things, as not onely health, wealth,  
friends, &c. but others, that you at  
that time stande in most neede of.

*Pro. 30. 8. 9. Gen. 28. 20. 21. Iam. 5.  
17. 18.*

- 15 Therefore pray God to giue you  
them with his fauour : and with his  
blessing : and with the right vse of  
them : and with a contented mind :  
& with faith in Gods prouidence,  
that you may depend vpon him.  
*Gen. 28. 20. Deut. 28. 2. 3. &c. Phil. 4.  
11. 12. Math. 6. 25. &c.*

- 16 Pray God that you may alwaies  
be prepared for the crosse, whatsoe-  
uer it shall please him to laie vpon  
you : namely, that you may haue  
strength to beare it, patience and  
cōfort in the midst of it; & grace to  
profit by it : especially that you may  
bee readie euerie houre for death.  
*Math. 16. 24. Rom. 8. 26. 28. Phil. 1.*

23. & 2. Cor 5. 9. & c.

17 Then pray for the whole Church of God; and therein for some parts especially, as those which are vnder the crosse, and wherein you doe liue; and herein for some by name, as the time will permit, and as you haue cause; as for your Gouvernors, high, and low; ecclesiasticall and ciuill: for your parents, children, friends, and such as haue desired your praiers. *Psa. 122. 6. 7. Ier. 29 7. Eph. 6. 18. 19. & 1. Sam. 1. 17.*

18 Last of all giue thanks vnto God in this maner: first for all his benefits vpon soule and body for this life, and the life to come. *Psal. 103. 2. & 145. 1. 2.* Secondly for all sins, which are forgien you; which you haue beene kept from: and which you haue beene recouered out of. *Psal. 103. 3. & 51. 15. & 16. 7.* Thirdly for al euill & punishments, which you haue escaped aboue others: or which you haue beene deliuered

littered out of: or which haue come  
vpon you as fatherly chastisements,  
and in them you haue beene com-  
forted. *Exod. 15. 1. 2. Psal. 107. 8. 15.*  
*25. & 119. 67. 71.*

19 And in all these giue thanks for  
your selfe, and for all yours, and for  
the whole Church of God. *1. Ti-*  
*morb. 2. 1.*

20 The continuall vse of prayer is all  
in all: for custome as in all other  
things, so in praier, maketh perfect:  
therefore the more you vse prayer,  
the more will God giue you the  
spirit of prayer.

*Pray alwaies, with all maner prayer and*  
*supplication in the spirit, and watch*  
*thereunto with all perseuerance and*  
*supplication, for all Saints, and for me.*  
*Eph. 6. 18.*



An order priuatelie to reade ouer  
*With great facilitie the olde Testa-*  
*ment once euery yere, and*  
*the new twise.*

# CHAPTERS of the

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| <i>Old Testam.</i> | <i>New Test.</i> |
| 777                | 260.             |

| Morning | Dayes of<br>the weeke | Euening. |
|---------|-----------------------|----------|
|---------|-----------------------|----------|

|   |   |   |
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The Olde  
Testament  
thus is read  
ouer once  
in a yere,  
and there  
will be two  
dayes to  
spare.

The New  
Testament  
thus is read  
ouer twise  
in a yere,  
and there  
will be one  
day to  
spare.

The PSALMES 150.

These may be read over by themselues, either  
once in a moneth or once in a quarter at the  
least: which is foure times in the yere.

I. TIM. 4. 13.

*Giue attendance vnto reading.*



*Hee that is desirous to learne and remember the Word of God, that he might liue according to it, let him consider of that which is written, Psalme 119. Part 2.*

THE TEXT.

*Wherewith shall  
a young man  
cense his waies?  
in taking heed  
thereto accor-  
ding to thy  
Word.*

*With my whole  
heart I sought  
thee : let mee  
not wander  
from thy com-  
mandement.*

*I haue hid thy  
promise in mine  
heart, that I  
might not sinne  
against thee.*

*Blessed art thou  
O Lord, teach  
me thy sta-  
tures.*

THE PARAPHRASIS.

**F**irst of all be perswaded, that the Word of God is onely that rule, whereby the whole life of euery man, & that in euery thing must be ordered : euen the life of a yong man, who thinketh, that he hath most reason for himselfe, why he should be excused, as commonly he is most disordered.

Then vpon this perswasion giue your selfe vnfaignedly to the reading & hearing of Gods Word, as to the meanes whereby he hath appointed to teach you : and pray to God in the diligent vse of those meanes for his holie spirit, that thereby you might come to the true vnderstanding of his Word.

That which you haue thus learned, let it not swimme aloft in your braine, but be deepe lie settled and hid in your heart as a treasure, framing all your affections vnto it : that so you may haue it in a readinesse whensoever you should vse it : otherwise though you know neuer so much, it will not keepe you from sinning against God.

You thus profiting, giue thankses to God for that which you learne, because be it neuer so little, it is more than many in the world doe know : yet content not your selfe with it, as though you had sufficient, but pray vnto him to be further inlightened, because it is lesse than

*With my lippes  
haue I declared  
all the iudge-  
ments of thy  
mouth.*

*I haue had as  
great delight in  
the way of thy  
testimonies, as  
in all riches.*

*I will medi-  
tate in thy pre-  
cepts, and con-  
sider thy  
wayes.*

*I will delight in  
thy statutes,  
and I will not  
forget thy  
Word.*

than many others doe, and you your selfe should know.

5 But aboue all, be carefull to talke of that vnto others, which you do dayly learne your selfe: and out of the abundance of your heart let your mouth speake. For by teaching others, you shall learne your selfe.

6 That you might do all these things, labour to haue ioy in the Word, and in all the exercises of it, more than in any worldly thing, and be occupied about those things with greatest delight: for in whatsoener we take greatest delight, that will sticke fastest by vs.

7 Last of all, meditate & consider of that with your selfe which you haue learned, and muse vpon it alone, not contenting your selfe with the generall rules, but labouring in your conscience to make the vse of them profitable to your selfe, in the particular practise thereof.

8 Thus doing all these things carefully, you shall be sure neuer to forget that which you learne: for though you doe not alwayes remember euery thing, yet God by his spirit will call so much into your remembrance as is needfull for you to know, and then especially when you haue most need of it; as in the houre of death, and in the day of temptation: but as you faile in all, or in any one of these, so may you feare to faile in the trueth of this promise.

*A good helpe for an ill memorie.*

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